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ESSAYS

ON

LITERATURE, HISTORY, POLITICS, ETC.

Leonard Woolf

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LITERATURE

BEN JONSON

In 1618 Ben Jonson, aged forty-six years and weighing just under twenty stone, an inveterate Londoner, decided for some mysterious reason that he must walk to Edinburgh. It may have been that the *Wanderlust* seized him; or James I. may have sent him there to collect material for a history of Scotland; or he may have gone in search of local colour, because he had the "intention to writt a fisher or pastoral play, and sett the stage of it in the Lowmond Lake". None of these reasons seems to me very convincing, but, at any rate, he accomplished this portentous walking tour. He must have left London in the month of June 308 years ago, and he took three months to walk to Edinburgh, consuming, there is reason to believe, two pairs of boots on the way. During his time in Scotland he stayed with William Drummond at Hawthornden, and Drummond jotted down notes of his conversation, which, in 1711, were published for the first time under the title *Heads of a Conversation betwixt the famous Poet Ben Jonson, and William Drummond of Hawthornden, January 1619.*

Old books, written a hundred or two hundred

or three hundred or more years ago, rarely have the power of lifting one out of one's own age and of making one feel the mental and material atmosphere of the past. Ordinarily, one looks at the past through an old book as one looks at a mummy, or a Greek vase, or a stuffed and extinct animal through the glass case in a museum. Perhaps it is because William Drummond never intended to write a book at all, but only to put down the very words that Ben Jonson used—at any rate, in my case the *Conversations* have this rare power of making me feel that I am living in and breathing the actual atmosphere of another age. And with this curious result: that I feel perfectly at home and comfortable in it, infinitely more comfortable than I should have felt in that of the eighteenth century and of Mr. Hickey. If I had found myself walking with Mr. Pope in his garden across the river at Twickenham, or sitting with Dr. Johnson and Mr. Boswell and Mr. Gibbon at the Club, or drinking wine with Mr. Hickey after dinner, I should have felt thoroughly ill at ease. The conversation, no doubt, would have been amusing and delightful, and I should have known that I had fallen into a civilized society, but I am quite sure that I should not have known what in the world to say to Mr. Pope, Dr. Johnson, or even to Mr. Gibbon; and Mr. Hickey in the flesh would have been unbearable. But Ben Jonson—if Ben Jonson strolled into my room to-night and sprawled his enormous body in my easy chair, and talked, as he did at Hawthornden,

of men and books, and told his stories and his scandal about Queen Elizabeth, we should have an extraordinarily comfortable and amusing evening together, for we should be looking at the world and at life from the same angle.

This may, of course, be a purely personal predilection, for you might prefer the company of Pope and I of Jonson just in exactly the same way that you prefer your friend Jones and I my friend Smith. But I think that there is something rather more than that. The early seventeenth century was more "modern" than any other period until you reach the year 1900: the angle at which Jonson and his friends observed life, and the shades of their misery and their happinesses, were much the same as our own. The whole thing is, of course, a question of very slight shades and nuances of thought and feeling and slight turns of sentences. "What a deal of cold business doth a man misspend the better part of life in! in scattering compliments, tendering visits, gathering and venting news, following feasts and plays, making a little winter-love in a dark corner." This sentence from Ben Jonson's *Discoveries* contains a general reflection which every man who has reached the age of thirty-five and has lived in civilized society at any time during the last five hundred years has frequently made to himself. But the precise and personal shade which Jonson gives it by the last nine words of his sentence belongs to himself and to his time; the colour with which they paint a commonplace is not that of Milton or

Dryden, of Congreve or Swift, Pope or Johnson, Wordsworth or Shelley, Tennyson or Browning, but it is very near the shade of feeling which many a writer to-day attempts, much less successfully, to translate into sentences.

The character of Ben Jonson emerges with a clearness and solidity which is itself characteristic of the man himself. It seems strange at first sight that we should know so much more about Jonson than about any of his contemporary writers. The great Elizabethans and their lives are really very shadowy and vague to us—what do we know save a few scrappy " facts " and a thin, flickering outline of " character " in the case of Marlowe, Webster, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Shakespeare himself? I should not recognize Marlowe, Webster, or Beaumont if I met one of them in the asphodel fields, but I should know Ben at once and as much about him as about Keats or Tennyson. Why have we twenty-two letters of Jonson and not one of Shakespeare's? I have not the faintest idea of anything which Shakespeare ever said at the " Mermaid ", but I can almost hear Ben Jonson's conversation at the tavern in Bread Street, or later at the " Old Devil ", including that oft-told, " tedious story " of his walk to Scotland.

It is strange that Ben Jonson has died as a writer while living on as a personage. Perhaps the New Oxford University Press edition of his works will do something towards restoring one of the greatest of English writers to the place which he ought to occupy in the estimation and affection

of readers. He is less read, I should say, than any other classic of equal calibre, and even the " high-brows " praise him apologetically. Despite his immense reputation among his contemporaries, in his own lifetime the chill of neglect touched him in his last years, and he fell out of fashion. In the ebb and flow of fashion, he has never since that date been caught up in an eddy of taste or been lifted, as so many old writers are, on a great wave of sudden understanding and appreciation. I am inclined to think that, if he does not win his deserts to-day, he will never win them, that there must be some quality in him, invisible to me, which chills the enthusiasm of most people. At any rate, I am sure that since the early years of the seventeenth century there has never been a time at which the " spirit of the age " has been more in tune with some of the most characteristic things in Jonson's art.

Ben Jonson as a writer attracts me no less than he does as a conversationalist and as a man. Most critics since Hazlitt seem to consider some apology necessary for praising the author of *Volpone*; and in an otherwise excellent *History of English Literature*, published lately, I read once more that he lacked " true genius ". The answer to that is that " true genius " is a phrase which no critic should use, and which no great writer should, therefore, possess. I am very glad to hear that Ben Jonson did not possess it. But even Mr. T. S. Eliot, and after him Mr. Aldous Huxley, seem to praise Jonson apologetically. The tone seems to

me incongruous and unnecessary. The idea that Jonson was a pedant who could not draw a " character " but only " types ", whose learning was not controlled by but controlled him, who wrote some good comedies and bad tragedies, who produced a lyric or two worthy of inclusion in an anthology, but failed to produce the fine flower of true poetry, the " magical phrase ", is derived ultimately from people whose knowledge of Jonson is confined to a nodding acquaintanceship with *Every Man in his Humour*, and who know the song " Drink to me only with thine eyes ". The only defence of Jonson which is necessary is to tell people to read him. If they read the *Masques* they will see that he is a poet; if they read *Volpone*, *The Silent Woman*, and *The Alchemist* they will find that he is the author of three " comedies " which will stand with any play written in English outside Shakespeare; if they read *Discoveries* and the *Conversations* they will see that he is the first English critic, a first-rate prose writer, an original thinker, and a great character. He could afford to do without genius.

That is the paradox of his reputation, that he has lived on as a personage when he has died as a writer. It is partly, of course, the triumph of character. A character hewn out of rough rock, intense vitality, immense robustness—a barbarian and a cultured scholar, a brawling bully and a brilliant, witty conversationalist, a pedant and a poet—one of those uncouth, intolerable, unrestrained, magnificent, and fascinating Englishmen

who suddenly appear, imposing themselves upon and dominating their age and remaining a tradition, a national monument, for posterity. No one has ever excelled Jonson for sheer force and vitality of character. You can see it in the exuberance of his writings, even more in the astonishing violence of his perpetual quarrels. Reading his life, one can hardly fail occasionally to pause and ask oneself whether after all one would have liked to meet this terrible creature who, when a soldier in the Low Countries, had challenged an army and killed his opponent in single combat; who killed Gabriel Spencer the actor in a duel in Hoxton Fields beyond Shoreditch; who quarrelled with and beat Marston, quarrelled with Dekker, quarrelled with Inigo Jones and a multitude of lesser men; who so irritated his host at Hawthornden that he has left us this character sketch of Jonson, written immediately after his departure :

> He is a great lover and praiser of himself, a contemner and Scorner of others, given rather to losse a friend, than a Jest, jealous of every word and action of those about him (especiallie after drink) which is one of the Elements jn which he liveth), a dissembler of ill parts which raigne jn him, a bragger of some good that he wanteth, thinketh nothing well bot what either he himself, or some of his friends and Countrymen hath said or done. He is passionately kynde and angry, carelesse either to gaine or keep, Vindicative, but if he be well answered, at himself.

It would, however, be a great mistake to give too much importance to the crudely violent side of Jonson or to the natural exasperation of the thin-

blooded, retiring host when, at the end of the long week-end visit, he sat down in the quiet house and thought of his formidable, fatiguing, boisterous, and contemptuous guest. People who possess Jonson's passion and vitality are always quarrelsome and, on week-end visits, terribly fatiguing. But even Drummond notes that he was passionately kind as well as angry. To anyone who can forgive a man for thinking and feeling passionately, Jonson was the best of friends and companions. If any proof of the immense charm of his character, other than his own works, is wanted, you may find it in the extraordinary intimacy between Jonson, in old age, and the best of the younger generation. And there can be no greater testimonial to a great man's character than the fact that the young find it possible, when he is old, to treat him as an intimate.

HAZLITT

"No man is truly great", wrote Hazlitt in, perhaps, the best of his essays, "who is great only in his lifetime. The test of greatness is the page of history." Hazlitt himself would hardly on these or any other terms manage to creep into a list of the least of our great men, and yet his case presents some difficulties to the weigher of worth and reputation. There is, for instance, a recent selection of his essays in which the introduction and notes of the learned Mr. George Sampson equal in volume what we are given of Hazlitt himself. If posthumous reputation be the test of greatness, is not such intensive editing of a writer 140 years after his birth some proof that he had something more than skill, talent, or cleverness, which are as common in the world as stupidity? If we say no, we make a sad reflection upon our contemporaries. For Hazlitt is among the earliest of modern journalists; he links Mr. J. C. Squire and Mr. A. G. Gardiner to Addison and Steele and Johnson. For every journalist who "scribbled in his garret" in 1826 there are twenty in 1926, and for every square inch of copy which Hazlitt and his contemporaries produced we must produce

at least a square yard. The average literary value of these inches and yards of print may be a subject of dispute. One of the best of our critics in 1875, when he turned over the pages of the original *Edinburgh Review* and compared it with the "periodical literature" of his day, was "amazed at its inferiority". He pays a grudging tribute to a few gleams of Sydney Smith's humour and to the "swaggering and slashing" of Jeffrey, but, "as a rule, one may most easily characterize the contents by saying that few of the articles would have a chance of acceptance by the editor of a first-rate periodical to-day; and that the majority belong to an inferior variety of what is now called 'padding'". Now the standard of the 70's in Fleet Street was amazingly high when Froude edited *Fraser's* and Lord Morley the *Fortnightly* and Leslie Stephen the *Cornhill*, and it may well be that we have fallen as far below 1875 as 1875 rose above the years of the consulship of Gifford and Jeffrey. And yet it should be remembered that in the days when Jeffrey was swaggering and slashing in the *Edinburgh* and Gifford had qualified for the situation of editor of the *Quarterly* "by a happy combination of defects, natural and acquired", Lamb and Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt were filling the pages of the *Examiner* and the *Reflector* and the *London Magazine* with work which has been printed and reprinted for a hundred years, and which Mr. Sampson and the University of Cambridge are still re-editing with the care and scholarship only due to classics. It is difficult to believe that so

happy a fate in 1975 awaits many of the articles which the editors of 1875 accepted, or that 2026 will find so much to re-edit in the journals and periodicals of 1926.

Hazlitt went as near to achieving greatness as any man who has missed it. Whenever one thinks of an adjective to describe his many qualities, one has to fall back upon that adjective which trembles upon but never over the edge of greatness, "good". He was a good journalist, a good critic, and a good writer; he had a good brain, good taste, and a good style; in fact, one of the few good things which he lacked was good nature. This one deficiency had much to do with his failure to step over the edge of goodness into greatness. Nothing is so difficult as to be a great ill-natured man. Milton almost alone among great writers had an inner harmony or music capable of transfiguring and transcending a natural peevishness of the soul, while a few, like Swift, have been able to blow the cinders of their ill-humour into a fire of contempt for the world's cruelties and stupidities. Hazlitt, however, was never able either to transcend or to universalize his bitterness. The reason was that he found it almost impossible ever to forget about Hazlitt. One of his friends, who admired him " almost to extravagance " and desired, not apparently with any great success, to love him, told De Quincey that whenever Hazlitt put his hand within his waistcoat, as he had a habit of doing, "he himself felt a sudden recoil of fear, as from one who was searching for a hidden dagger ". This trait and

the friend's uneasiness help to explain much. They might have helped Lamb to answer the question which Hazlitt put him, as to why none of his friends liked him. For, if we are to believe De Quincey, Hazlitt seemed to hate those whom hollow custom obliged him to call his " friends " considerably more than those whom he was entitled to call his enemies. A man who is " perpetually mounting guard upon all the citadels of malignity ", who is always feeling for the hidden dagger under his waistcoat, and who prefers to stick it between the shoulders of his " friend " rather than of his enemy, suffers from a kind of personal ill-humour which makes it impossible to rise above the trivialities of his own mind and life into any impersonal passion. And there can be no greatness without impersonal passion. That is precisely the spot at which Hazlitt stops and remains only " a very good writer ". For a passionate man, passionate in his likes and still more in his hates, he manages to get singularly little passion into his words. He has far more humour than his critics usually allow; his vigour, imagination, and brilliancy rarely flag, yet his sentences come out in glittering jerks like brilliant jets of fire out of a Roman candle. It is impossible to read him for any length of time because this series of brilliant jets soon jars upon the reader's nerves. There is no central fire of impersonal passion which alone can weld sentences into a paragraph and paragraphs into a book. Even when he is giving full rein to the bitterness of his humour against

Gifford and the *Edinburgh Review*, there is a personal vindictiveness in the performance which makes even his anger jerky. He trounces Gifford just as Punch in the Punch and Judy Show trounces his victims, counting the blows—" One, two, three, four ". And the reader unconsciously counts with him the whack of each sentence—" One, two, three, four ".

There are, however, some curious points about the psychology of Hazlitt's personal ill-humour. By nature he was clearly a man of great passions, and his misanthropy did not originate in egoism. It was politics and such impersonal things as Liberty and Equality, not vanity, which originally soured Hazlitt. He was born with a prejudice for liberty, personal and political, and his father's influence and teaching deepened this prejudice into a passion. The French Revolution made Hazlitt, as it did Wordsworth and many of his other friends, a revolutionary; but, unlike Wordsworth, he became a more determined revolutionary in proportion as Britain and the British Government became between 1793 and 1815 more and more reactionary and more and more fierce in fighting for liberty abroad by suppressing every form of liberty at home. Hazlitt's views are now the commonplaces of every liberty-loving Englishman; the mere fact that he held them during the Napoleonic Wars put him in opposition to the spirit of his age and subjected him to the kind of persecution which under such circumstances is always meted out by those in power to the minority. Only a very

strong man can remain permanently in a minority of one and escape personal embitterment. Hazlitt was not a strong, but a very nervous and sensitive man. He was unable to meet the kind of unpopularity and abuse reserved for a " liberal " by Gifford and his contemporaries, and retain any kind of impersonal feeling or passion. His egotism was wounded and became diseased, and what began as an impersonal passion for political liberty ended in an obsession about Hazlitt. This perversion and confusion are noted by De Quincey, who, however, misses the real psychological point. " Hazlitt viewed all personal affronts or casual slights towards himself as tending to something more general, and masquing under a pretended horror of Hazlitt the author a real hatred, deeper than it was always safe to avow, for those social interests which he was reputed to defend. It was not Hazlitt whom the wretches struck at; no, no; it was democracy, or it was freedom, or it was Napoleon, whose shadow they saw in the rear of Hazlitt; and Napoleon, not for anything in him that might be really bad, but in revenge of that consuming wrath against the thrones of Christendom, for which (said Hazlitt) let us glorify his name eternally."

How passionate Hazlitt was by nature is shown by his *Liber Amoris*. The treatment of this book by the critics reveals the depth of snobbishness in human nature. Nearly all the critics hold up shuddering hands of horror before it and try in the best of taste to look the other way. Mr.

Sampson dismisses it in a sentence, without mentioning its name, as " a disagreeable book ". Mr. Birrell says that it belongs to " the realm of things unspeakable—' vile kitchen stuff ', fit only for the midden ". Sir Leslie Stephen wrote about it with that moral and judicial disapproval in which the Victorians excelled. And Stevenson outdid them all by refusing to write a life of Hazlitt because he was the author of *Liber Amoris*. And all this moral pother because Hazlitt fell in love with a servant-girl and wrote and published of her very much what Catullus and all other authors who have had unfortunate love-affairs have written about their mistresses. Hazlitt's bad taste consisted in the fact that his mistress was called Sarah Walker instead of Lesbia or Cynthia. All this moral indignation is wasted upon the *Liber Amoris* and obscures the light which it throws upon Hazlitt's curious temperament. It is not a great work by any means: it is what De Quincey called it, " an explosion of frenzy ". And if anyone wishes to learn the kind of passion of which Hazlitt and many another sane man is capable, he should read the passage in which Hazlitt describes how he suddenly had a screaming fit in his lodgings, dashed the " little image " of Buonaparte on the floor, stamped upon it, and finally in broad daylight dashed out screaming into Southampton Row.

AN ENGLISHMAN

COBBETT'S *Rural Rides* and selections from his writings have been recently published for use in schools. I hope that this means that there is a revival in the appreciation of Cobbett. Nations, like individuals, are more often proud of their bad than of their good qualities, and, on this account, one may not feel altogether comfortable as to the spirit in which Cobbett will be taught and learnt in schools. He had all the vices as well as all the virtues of the typical John Bull, and in some schools and by some schoolmasters I can imagine the vices being taken for virtues and the virtues themselves being overlooked. Nevertheless, the good things in him are so many and so good that it seems absurd to feel anything but pleasure at boys and girls being brought up on the *Rural Rides* instead of Smiles or Mrs. Hemans.

First among Cobbett's virtues I place his English style. I cannot imagine any English prose more suitable to be given as a pattern and model to the ordinary man and woman. If England ever becomes a civilized country, 90 per cent of the population will write like William Cobbett. His English is plain, absolutely unaffected, vigorous and supple, beautiful. He knows instinctively not

only exactly what he wants to say, but also the words which will most naturally and harmoniously express his meaning. I get something of the same kind of pleasure in watching the way in which his words clothe his thoughts as I do in watching the satiny coat of a race-horse ripple over the muscles as he walks. In each case the " fit " is so perfect and so natural. Cobbett's style is extraordinarily English. There are, of course, far greater English prose-writers than he is, but no one, I believe, has ever written sentences which are more perfectly in keeping with the peculiar genius of the English language. (It is because this faculty is natural and unconscious in him that I say that in an English Utopia we ordinary persons would all write like Cobbett.) When you read a paragraph of Cobbett, all you can say is: " Well, that simply *is* English"; you cannot say the same of Sir Thomas Browne or of Milton or of many far less Latinized prose-writers.

Cobbett seems to me to get into his sentences something of the atmosphere of the English country and the English climate as well as of the English language and the English character. This is true of all his writings, even of his tedious, bullying, blustering political abuse, but it is what gives a peculiar quality and charm to his descriptions of English country and so to his *Rural Rides*. What could be simpler or apparently more easy to write than the following passages, yet how many people could ride out on a January morning from Kensington and return with this in their note-books?—

However, man was not the maker of the land; and, as to human happiness, I am of opinion that as much, and even more, falls to the lot of the leather-legged chaps that live in and rove about amongst those clays and woods as to the more regularly disciplined labourers of the rich and prime parts of England. As " God has made the back to the burthen ", so the clay and coppice people make the dress to the stubs and bushes. Under the sole of the shoe is *iron*; from the sole six inches upwards is a highlow; then comes a pair of leather breeches; then comes a stout doublet; over this comes a smock-frock; and the wearer sets brush and stubs and thorns and mire at defiance. I have always observed that woodland and forest labourers are best off in the main. The coppices give them pleasant and profitable work in winter. If they have not so great a corn-harvest, they have a three weeks' harvest in April or May; that is to say, in the season of barking, which in Hampshire is called *stripping*, and in Sussex *flaying*, which employs women and children as well as men. . . .

Even in winter the coppices are beautiful to the eye, while they comfort the mind with the idea of shelter and warmth. In spring they change their hue from day to day during two whole months, which is about the time from the first appearance of the delicate leaves of the birch to the full expansion of those of the ash; and even before the leaves come at all to intercept the view, what in the vegetable creation is so delightful to behold as the bed of a coppice bespangled with primroses and bluebells? The opening of the birch leaves is the signal for the pheasant to begin to crow, for the blackbird to whistle, and the thrush to sing; and just when the oak-buds begin to look reddish, and not a day before, the whole tribe of finches burst forth in songs from every bough, while the lark, imitating them all, carries the joyous sounds to the sky.

Cobbett is as English in his thoughts as he is in his style. But at this point it is impossible to speak

of the virtues without also mentioning the vices. He belongs to the same breed as Dr. Johnson. His opinions were nearly always prejudices, often grotesque prejudices, and yet, even when most grotesque, always springing, in a peculiarly English way, from a subsoil of native "common-sense". When Cobbett writes that the trade of shoemaker " numbers more men of sense and of public spirit than any other in the kingdom ", I feel a little glow of smiling pleasure, just as I do when Dr. Johnson remarks that all foreigners are fools. Each of these beliefs is a prejudice which I personally do not happen to share, yet I cannot but recognize that each has its roots just touching that deep subsoil of British common-sense. It is impossible not to feel affection for a man who holds Cobbett's view of shoemakers or Dr. Johnson's view of foreigners. And when one happens to share Cobbett's prejudices, as, for instance, his hatred of sham Gothic arches or fir-trees or paper money or war, then the blunt, honest vigour with which he expresses them is very refreshing. Even when he is wrong—and nine times out of ten he is hopelessly, incredibly wrong—you always see, as in the case of Dr. Johnson's wrong-headednesses, what is at the root of them, and feel a certain sympathy with it. But—and now I come to the faults and vices of Cobbett. But, after all, it is fortunately unnecessary to say more than a word about his vices, for they are very fully, clearly, and ably dissected by Hazlitt in his essay. The worst of Cobbett is that he always has someone and something which he wants to abuse

and beat and bully. He must always have a prejudice *against* something or someone. And he cannot leave this butt for his contempt or abuse alone. He drags it in again and again to spoil his sentence or his paragraph and to weary his reader. But all that is in Hazlitt.

HERBERT SPENCER

Some thirty years ago it was possible, if you were lucky, to witness a curious spectacle occasionally at Paddington Station. A tall, vigorous, red-faced, old gentleman stood in a first-class compartment superintending the operations of four porters. Round the old gentleman's waist was wound a thick piece of string, which "issued like a tail from underneath the back of his coat", and to the end of the string was attached a brown-paper parcel, which the old gentleman held in his hand. The operations of the porters consisted in slinging a large hammock in the railway carriage, and, when this had been satisfactorily achieved in accordance with his minute directions, the old gentleman was with considerable difficulty hoisted into the hammock. He continued to hold the brown-paper parcel; the blinds were drawn down, and the train steamed out of the station. The old gentleman was Mr. Herbert Spencer, and the brown-paper parcel contained that part of the MS. of *The Synthetic Philosophy* which he was then writing. And it is worth recalling that upon one of these occasions a porter, who, like a true Englishman, seems to have argued that only rank could

warrant and explain such eccentricity, turned to the lady who had been seeing Mr. Spencer off, and, with a jerk of the head towards the departing train, said, " Beg pardon, miss, but is he Earl Spencer? "

A man who attaches himself by a piece of string to his MSS., and who insists upon being slung up in a hammock when he goes by train on his summer holidays, will always to English porters appear eccentric. But the real interest of eccentricities consists in what causes them, and in trying to trace how they arise in the deeper recesses of the mind with sufficient strength to break through the tremendous atmospheric pressure of social convention into which the ordinary man is helplessly born, and out of which he helplessly escapes only by death. In Spencer's case his eccentricities are of more than usual interest, because they sprang from exactly the same mental recesses as the philosophy which made him famous. The string, the hammock, and the ten volumes of *Synthetic Philosophy* are all manifestations of precisely the same mental characteristics. Earls are eccentric because, being earls, they can afford to be independent; Spencer was eccentric because, being the son of an aggressive nonconformist schoolmaster who refused to take off his hat to anyone, he combined a passion for freedom with a passion for ratiocination. Hence when ratiocination " taught him that by travelling in a hammock when going a long journey he avoided the evil consequences which usually followed the shaking of the train ", his passion for

liberty caused him immediately to sling his hammock regardless of the fact that more illogical and conventional people sit upon the seats. And hence his *Philosophy* is one vast argumentative pæan in praise of ratiocination and individuality and liberty.

It is a great merit in Mr. Hugh Eliot's book on Spencer that its author insists upon this connection between the character of the philosopher and the content of his philosophy. I have only one quarrel with Mr. Eliot. His exposition and summaries of the eighteen volumes of philosophy are admirable, his judgement of the value and effect of Spencer's thought is sound, his account of his life and character is very amusing. But Mr. Eliot's Spencer remains too much the eccentric, the bloodless and passionless philosopher of *Punch*, one of those super-terrestrial thinkers whom one can imagine only *avec de grandes robes de pédants*. No one would imagine from Mr. Eliot's pages that Spencer was even in crotchety age a very lovable old man, or that he, when well over threescore years and ten, chased a pretty young lady round the drawing-room and gave her "a resounding kiss" on the lips. Mr. Eliot neither in his text nor his bibliography makes any mention of a singularly fascinating book, *Home Life with Herbert Spencer*, which was written by the ladies with whom he lived for some eight years near Regent's Park, and which reveals a side of his mind and character that does not receive full justice in the more official biographies.

It is a great mistake in psychology to think that Spencer's emotions and feelings were weak. They were abnormally strong. Great individuality of character springs not from the reasoning part of the mind, but from the emotional, and logic alone never made any man eccentric. The most modern psychology teaches us that the more obvious manifestations of the emotions are no clue to their real nature or strength, that it is what we do with our emotions in the inner recesses of our minds that is most important. As soon as you regard Spencer from this point of view, you get new light upon his mind and character.

Spencer, it is admitted by everyone, had an intense " individuality "—that is to say, a passion for doing and thinking what he, Spencer, wanted to do and think. " Few people ", he once remarked, " can say what I can say. I have thought what I liked, done what I liked, been where I liked." Now one of the things which Spencer liked—nearly everyone in the world does—was to find reasons for proving that what he liked to think was true and what he liked to do was good. And his passion for finding these reasons was as intense as his passion for doing and thinking what he liked, and the two passions continually interacted upon and fanned one another. For instance, he did not like French art, and the reason which he found for it was that " French art, if not sanguinary, is usually obscene ". The truth was that he had a violent dislike of anything which was either sanguinary or obscene. Now he did not like the

sanguinary simply because he had a passion for freedom. The passion for freedom made him an anti-militarist and an anti-Socialist, and a large part of his philosophy is directed to finding reasons for believing in the badness of a militarist and Socialist society. He was very fond of a game of billiards, and therefore when we arrive at the very Holy of Holies of *The Synthetic Philosophy*, Ethics, we find that among other things it provides us with reasons for approving of billiards. Again Spencer's natural inclination was not to philosophy at all, but to science, to tracing the *scientific* causes of all kinds of different phenomena. He had no aptitude and less taste for metaphysics. At the same time he had a strong taste for idleness and a strong distaste for reading books. The results of these likes and dislikes, when combined with an indomitable individuality, are truly amazing. For a quarter of a century he turned philosophy into science. He wrote eighteen volumes on scientific subjects in the most scientific period of history without reading a single book. Those eighteen volumes revolutionized human thought, for they taught us to regard everything in the universe, whether material or mental, whether history, or biology, or psychology, or sociology, or politics, as not static but dynamic. He liked science, and so he thought scientifically " I have thought what I liked ", he said, and he might have added, " I have liked what I thought ". And so finally, when he comes to write about education, he finds a vast number of reasons for believing that

science is pre-eminently the best subject for the education of children.

When Spencer was thirty-five he had a curious nervous breakdown, which affected the whole of the rest of his life and his character. The only symptom of this illness seems to have been " a peculiar sensation in the head ". There can be no doubt that it was one of those nervous disorders which result in the patients becoming ill because they imagine themselves to be ill. Spencer became a permanent valetudinarian of this sort. His individuality naturally came out strongly in his symptoms. For instance, he could not write, talk, or read for more than a few minutes at a time. When writing the *Philosophy*, he and his secretary used to get into a boat on the Serpentine. Spencer would dictate for a quarter of an hour, then row hard for five minutes in order " to relieve the congestion of blood in the brain ", then dictate for another quarter of an hour, and so on. But there is a pathetically comic story which throws some light upon this valetudinarianism. Once, when an old man, he had a particularly severe attack of this symptomless disorder. It was a November day of impenetrable fog, and all day long the old man lay in bed while a maiden lady sat watching in a chair by the fireside. All day long there was complete silence in the room except for a groan from the bed which accompanied the ceaseless raising and dropping of the old man's hand. The fog grew blacker and blacker, the gloom of the room heavier and heavier, when suddenly towards

evening a belated bluebottle rose out of a corner and began to buzz drearily about the room. The lady, looking at the bluebottle, said half to herself and half out aloud, "You ought to be dead." "Wh-what! What did you say?" came in feeble surprise from the bed. The lady explained that she had said that the bluebottle ought to be dead at that time of the year. "I saw no bluebottle," said Spencer; "but you suddenly looked straight at me and emphatically cried, '*You* ought to be dead'." The invalid then broke into low, irresistible laughter and promptly began to recover.

Imaginary illnesses are more serious than real ones and more difficult to cure. Spencer devoted to his valetudinarianism the same originality and vigour which produced *The Synthetic Philosophy*. It obsessed him, it attracted and turned in upon himself nearly all the very strong emotions which he had naturally towards ordinary human things like women and children. It threw over the last part of his life a veil of petty and irritable tragedy. "The average colour of the whole consciousness", he wrote to Mrs. Sidney Webb, describing his own mind, "is grey". And hence this self-willed, passionate, lovable man appeared to the majority of his contemporaries an embodiment of grey, unemotional, inhuman logic. His last words seem to me a curious allegorical commentary upon his life. When he lay dying, he called his secretary to him and said: "Now I take this step for the benefit of those who are to be my

executors; my intention being that after death this my body shall be conveyed by sea to Portsmouth." The words, as his secretary remarked, are characteristic in syntactical expression, but meaningless.

THE FALL OF STEVENSON

THERE has never been a more headlong fall in a writer's reputation than there was in Stevenson's after his death. The consumptive Scotsman who walked down Bond Street in a black shirt, a red tie, a velvet jacket, and a smoking-cap, and who finally retired to live and die on a coral island in the South Seas, was just the man to captivate the taste of the romantic 'nineties. Mr. Gosse is almost the sole survivor of the inner circle of—somewhat quarrelsome—admirers who helped to create the Stevenson legend. The climax of the legend was that Stevenson not only wore a velvet coat, had flashing eyes, and was a brilliant talker, but was also a great writer, a great novelist, a great essayist, a great thinker, and a consummate artist in words. That romantic age in which Andrew Lang, Mr. Gosse, Henley, and Sir Sidney Colvin were prophets swallowed the legend whole, asked for more, and got it. Stevenson seemed to have been permanently placed in a very high niche among the greatest of writers when the younger generation began to read *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant.* The effect was appalling: the velvet coat suddenly lost its romance; the name "Tusitala" roused

no more emotions than did such monosyllables as "Shaw" or "Wells"; and ill-mannered young men began to say that the rhythm of Stevenson's great passages was spoiled for them because they could always hear the machinery grinding out the tune. Never has there been a swifter or greater flow of that terrible tide which inevitably sweeps in and cuts off one generation from the next, making it impossible for the sons to understand the enthusiasms of their fathers and leaving a few poor embittered survivors stranded high and dry on the further shore.

Well, even metaphorical tides have a habit of ebbing and flowing; and when a writer's reputation has been plunging steadily downhill for thirty years, it has usually gone too far, and it is time for a revival. Is there going to be a resurrection of Robert Louis Stevenson? To judge from the publishers' lists, which are good barometers of literary reputation, Stevenson's resurrection has already begun. Messrs. Heinemann have, in the last year or so, published two complete editions of his works, while a new *Life*, by Miss Rosaline Masson, a cheap edition of his novels, and a selection of his essays have appeared during the same time. I cannot believe that the simultaneous appearance of all these books is fortuitous; it is rather the first ebb in the tide which carried us all so far from the velvet coat and Tusitala.

This ebb in the tide has been the cause of my rereading a good deal of Stevenson: *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *The Body Snatcher*, and some of the

famous essays. There was more pleasure in the re-reading than I had expected. If Stevenson is not the great writer whom they thought him to be thirty years ago, and whom Miss Masson apparently still thinks him to-day, he is better than his present reputation among "highbrows" would lead one to suppose. The worst thing about him is his literary style. Mr. Rawlinson, who has edited the selection of his essays, after apologizing for their style and pointing out its most glaring faults, comes to the strange conclusion that "it is as an essayist that Stevenson will probably live". As an essayist Stevenson is already dead, and I do not believe that anyone will ever be able to resurrect him in the essay. The reason is that in that form of writing a false literary style tells most fatally against a writer, particularly when, as with Stevenson, he has nothing original to say. It is astonishing how drearily thin and artificial the famous "Aes Triplex" and "Pulvis et Umbra," for instance, are when one reads them again. Stevenson had no style of his own; as he said himself, he played the "sedulous ape" to great prose writers, and the consequence is that his essays have the same flavour as those which brilliant undergraduates send in for University prizes. I will quote a sentence or two in which he seems to me to be at his best, and I think that most people will agree that they do not reach a higher level than that of any first-rate journalist:

As for the innumerable army of anæmic and tailorish persons who occupy the face of this planet with so much

propriety, it is palpably absurd to imagine them in any such situation as a love-affair.

Our race has never been able contentedly to suppose that the noise of its wars, conducted by a few young gentlemen in a corner of an inconsiderable star, does not re-echo among the Courts of Heaven with quite a formidable effect.

Do the old men mind it, as a matter of fact? Why, no. They were never merrier; they have their grog at night, and tell the raciest stories, they hear of the death of people about their own age, or even younger, not as if it was a grisly warning, but with a simple childlike pleasure at having outlived someone else ; and when a draught might puff them out like a guttering candle, or a bit of a stumble shatter them like so much glass, their old hearts keep sound and unaffrighted, and they go on bubbling with laughter, through years of man's age compared to which the valley of Balaklava was as safe and peaceful as a village cricket-green on Sunday.

Stevenson was quite a good imitator of great writers, but he was not a great writer or artist himself. His ear for verbal music was not fine, and his phrases are rather laboured. He is, indeed, at his best where he is sufficiently interested in his subject to forget about his style. He can then write good, plain, honest English which makes no pretensions to be great literature. This is the case in *Treasure Island* and in some of his other stories. I must have read *Treasure Island* many times, but, when I read it again in the Tusitala Edition, it still carried me along with it, and was thoroughly entertaining. It is pre-eminently a day-dream type of story, and Stevenson always remained a typical day-dream writer. He appeals to the child or to the primitively

childish in grown men and women. There is nothing against him in that; a good story is rare, and personally I hope that I shall never grow too old to enjoy one. *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae* are all good stories, and the more Stevenson forgets himself and his style in them and becomes absorbed in telling the tale, the better they are. And there is one other form of writing in which occasionally the same thing happens to him. He wrote one really good essay, the essay on Samuel Pepys in his *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. There again the character and story of Pepys caught his attention, and he forgot to think about his words and periods: the result is a vigorous, subtle study of an extremely interesting person.

SAMUEL BUTLER

The publication of the complete works of Samuel Butler in the extremely handsome Shrewsbury Edition caused me to read or re-read nearly the whole of what that curious writer produced. It fills twenty large volumes. Twenty volumes of any author are a formidable task for the reader and test for the writer. A quarter of a century ago at Cambridge, Butler was one of the writers who meant a great deal to us. I had read him in a desultory way with pleasure ever since, and when I began on the Shrewsbury Edition I felt and said that he was one of the few writers whom I can always read, and whose complete works I can read, with pleasure. Possibly that is an opinion which has to be modified after the event. The truth is that it is extremely difficult to sail through Butler's complete works upon an even keel. There are few writers who make one veer so rapidly from enjoyment to boredom, from like to dislike, from admiration to contempt. I suppose that in saying this I am contradicting what I felt and said three years ago. But the man whose opinions in December 1926 remain precisely what they were in December 1923 is either a fool or dead, and I

am not ashamed to find that I do not think exactly the same of Butler to-day as I did in 1923 or 1901. I can indeed still always read Butler, and I can still read his complete works with pleasure, but the actual task of reading his complete works has shown me that the pleasure is mitigated by gusts of irritation.

The appearance of such a noble monument as the complete works of an author in twenty volumes inevitably turns one's thought to the position of that author in the hierarchy of letters. Butler's position has been, and still remains, a curious one. Only nine years ago a first edition of *Erewhon*, containing an inscription in Butler's own hand to Miss Savage, was sold by Mr. Dobell for 30s. It may be said that the collecting mania is so irrationally fickle that it furnishes no safe scale against which one can measure a writer's fame or reputation; but that thirty shillings shows, at any rate, that in 1914, twelve years after his death, Butler was still very narrowly known and narrowly appreciated, for otherwise, considering the curious way in which he published his books, the first-edition maniac would have certainly fastened upon his relics. Eight years later the maniac had begun to hear of Butler, for the same copy of *Erewhon* was sold at Sotheby's for £23. The price is still not extraordinary, particularly since the book was destined for America. It indicates that in the last ten years Butler's reputation has greatly increased, but that he is not yet a widely popular author. The judgement is confirmed by the

character of the complete edition. A limited and numbered edition of 750 copies, out of which 375 are to go to America, points to a restricted demand, especially when it is remembered that three at least of the books included are out of print in the ordinary edition.

Butler is not, nor will he ever become, a popular writer. When time has had the last word with him and has given him his final and fossilized place in the strata of literature, he will be less popular and in a lower stratum than he is to-day. This judgement is not the result of prejudice or of some lack of sympathy with Butler. In my own private hierarchy of letters he occupies an extremely high place. His peculiar humour, his dialectic, his precise eccentricities, a certain dryness of mind which seems able to convert so many things to a pinch of fine dust—all these qualities happen to appeal very strongly to me personally. But the critic ought sometimes to allow his mind to work undisturbed by his personal likes and dislikes.

To read through Butler's early miscellaneous writings collected in the first volume, and then to go on from them to his later and latest works, gives one a solid basis for criticism. At first sight, it is extraordinary how little of the characteristic Butler of *Erewhon*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *The Note Books* there appears to be in the early writings. Only very rarely does one catch a glimpse of the original and satirical mind which later made its temporary home in Clifford's Inn and the British Museum. And yet closer inspection reveals the

fact that the foundation upon which the later books were built had already been laid in the Cambridge essays and " Canterbury Settlement ". Here is a mind which thinks, not other people's thoughts, but its own—honest, clear, argumentative, singularly unemotional; and here is a style which never sinks below or attempts to rise above a certain level. In *Erewhon*, Butler found both a subject and himself. The elaborate satire on English life and society in the nineteenth century gives scope for the qualities mentioned above, and also for his eccentricities, originalities, and humour. Yet it remains in many ways the queerest satire that has ever been written. It is extraordinarily unemotional. With Swift or Cyrano de Bergerac or any other of the writers who have created these inverted Utopias somewhere on the other side of the moon or the mountains, one always feels that they are animated by some human emotion towards the customs or institutions which they are satirizing. They feel anger or indignation or pity or mere amusement at the antics of mankind which they show us through the telescope or microscope of satire. But when Butler describes the Musical Banks or the attitude of the Erewhonians towards disease, it is impossible to detect the least flicker of emotion either towards us and our ways or the Erewhonians and their ways. This makes *Erewhon* a very queer book, for what can be more strange and disquieting than a humorist who is apparently never amused? It appeals to me personally, I repeat; I happen to have a particular liking for

cranks, and the explanation of much which is puzzling in Butler should be looked for in crankiness. But this kind of queerness, crankiness, and unemotional frigidity is bound to narrow the circle of an author's readers. I will not enter upon the question whether it also precludes the book from greatness, whether, in fact, a great book, as some of our modern critics declare, must have something in it capable of appealing to all men. I rather suspect these vague generalizations about greatness and goodness. But in Butler's case, I think, the qualities which prevent him from being widely popular also prevent him from being a great writer. *Erewhon* and *The Way of All Flesh*, despite their originality of thought and humour, are not great books, and the reason is that the thought is always twisted a little, and kept from soaring by a twinge of crankiness, while thought, humour, satire, and language, owing to the absence of emotion, lack the warmth or glow which seems inseparable from great literature.

Erewhon, *The Way of All Flesh*, and the *Note Books* contain the best things which Butler wrote, but *The Fair Haven* in some ways reveals more nakedly than any of Butler's other works the peculiar way in which his mind operated. It is an attack upon Christianity, and it is designed to show that the evidence for the Resurrection which we find in the New Testament cannot be accepted. The form of the book is elaborately ironical. It is supposed to be written by an imaginary person, the late John Pickard Owen, whose imaginary brother,

William Bickersteth Owen, writes a prefatory memoir. The imaginary author is represented as having lost and then recovered his faith in Christianity, and the object of his posthumous book is to put his own experiences at the service of the infidel and the atheist, and so to convert them. His theory is that the kernel of Christianity is to be found in the story of the Resurrection, and that, while much of the New Testament must be rejected as unhistorical, if the central fact of the Resurrection can be established, everything else which really matters will remain. On the surface, the book professes to prove conclusively that Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

Butler's irony consists in making John Pickard Owen unconsciously disprove the very thing which he thinks that he is proving. So far there is nothing extraordinary in the scheme and form of the book; there are many precedents, particularly in English literature, for this kind of irony, which solemnly and elaborately disproves what on the surface you are solemnly and elaborately professing to prove. But the great ironists have never left the reader in any doubt as to what the real meaning is behind the façade of irony. One would have to be a very stupid person to misunderstand Swift when, in *A Modest Proposal to the Publick*, he writes :

> I have been assured by a very knowing *American* of my acquaintance in *London*, that a young healthy child, well nursed, is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether *stewed*, *roasted*, *baked*, or *boiled*; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a *fricassé*,

or a *ragoust.* I do therefore humbly offer it to the *publick consideration,* that of the hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males. . . . That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of *quality* and *fortune* through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in *winter.*

All Butler's paraphernalia is in this passage of Swift's; the extraordinarily detailed, reasonable, quiet, serious argument which the reader is not intended to " take seriously ". The remarkable thing about Butler is that nearly all his readers did take him seriously. The façade of irony is so delicate, the argument is so detailed and intricate, the real meaning below the surface so elusory, that, even though his book appeared in 1873, when the Resurrection was still a burning question of controversy, very few people saw what was its real meaning. Most reviewers and religious papers accepted Owen as a real person and the book as a defence of Christianity and orthodoxy, and Canon Ainger " sent it to a friend whom he wished to convert ". So wide was the misunderstanding that Butler decided to bring out a second edition immediately, under his own name and with a preface in which he made it clear that the book was intended to be ironical.

I read *The Fair Haven* for the first time over twenty years ago, and I remember being astonished that its real meaning had not been understood. On re-reading it more carefully I am inclined to revise that original judgement. Of course, if one reads the book knowing its history, knowing that it is by Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon*, it is easy enough to detect the irony, though I believe that a large number of people who profess to understand the book would not be able to state clearly the exact way in which Butler makes Owen's proof of the Resurrection disprove it. But I am convinced that in 1873 it would have been the easiest thing in the world to fail in detecting that the book was ironical. There is nothing obviously ridiculous anywhere in the book. The irony is most marked in the prefatory memoir, in the incident of the lady saying her prayers, and in a sentence such as: "He therefore, to my mother's inexpressible grief, joined the Baptists, and was immersed in a pond near Dorking." The argument of the book and the hinge of irony upon which it turns are so elaborately contrived that, as I have said, very few even of those readers who know that the book is an attack on Christianity could explain exactly how the hinge is supposed to work. If I ever had to set an examination paper in English Literature for advanced students, one of the questions would be: "Summarize as briefly as possible John Pickard Owen's defence of the Resurrection in *The Fair Haven*."

Whether it has to be reckoned as a failure on

the part of the satirist and ironist if, for some reason, the vast majority of his readers mistake his meaning and intentions is an interesting question. In the case of Butler the failure was not due to any bungling or want of skill on his part, but to the very odd, individual conformation of his mind. His squib misfired, not because it was badly made, but because it was made to go on fizzling, fizzling, fizzling ironically, and never to explode. It is not everyone who can appreciate a squib which does not go off, or a rocket which never bursts into coloured stars. But for those who do, for those who can acquire a taste for caviare, or for the products of queer and "cranky" minds, *The Fair Haven* is a fascinating book. None of Butler's other books are more characteristic of his method of approaching and handling a subject or of his curious sense of humour. It has, however, upon me a strange psychological effect which I cannot explain, but which, to a much less degree, some of his other books also have: I enjoy reading it immensely; the elaborate argument and irony give me great intellectual pleasure; I am never at all bored by it; and yet from time to time I put the book down and say to myself: "Really, it is almost inconceivable that any human being ever had the patience to *write* this book."

The Fair Haven will always remain a literary curiosity, and Butler's fame will probably always rest on *Erewhon*, *The Way of All Flesh*, and *The Note Books*. In some ways, however, he is at his best in *Alps and Sanctuaries*, a charming book

which is the model of all modern books of ruminating, philosophical, cultured travellers. Those who knew Butler say that you can hear him talking in it, and what higher praise could there be than that? It flows on easily like good talk, giving infinite opportunities for that curious humour, irony, and gently twisted thought of its author. It is not a great book, though an extremely good one, and I can see in it no trace of a little man's mind. But if you turn to Butler's scientific works on evolution you see him at his worst, for he shows unexpectedly an exasperating littleness of mind. There can be no question of the cleverness and ability displayed in them. And though much of the controversy is dead, one can still read them with interest and with pleasure. No books on scientific subjects have ever been better written, and the flicker of Butler's irony gives them a strange, twinkling light of their own which is very attractive. And yet there is a littleness of mind displayed in them which is extremely irritating. It comes out partly in the personal hostility of Butler towards those with whom he disagrees. No doubt, Butler had much to complain about in his treatment by the scientists. They looked upon him with the jealous eye which professionalism and trade unionism always turn upon the amateur interloper. In fact, they ignored him. This may explain, but, to my mind, it does not excuse, Butler's tone of personal rancour and pique. It is the tone of a small-minded man nursing a grudge and unable to give his undivided attention to

anything because he must always stop to see how he may " get his own back " on someone. Butler's charges against Darwin in *Unconscious Memory* are certainly not substantiated, and Darwin was quite justified in refusing to be drawn into a long, personal, acrimonious, and useless controversy. The continual girding at Darwin, which had already begun in *Evolution Old and New*, becomes in the two later books intolerably irritating. And when exactly the same note begins to be struck in *Luck or Cunning?* against Herbert Spencer, Romanes, Huxley, and when one notices that in most cases the point about which Butler is arguing is his own claim to be this or to have done that, the gusts of one's irritation become more violent and more prolonged.

It is becoming fashionable to make exaggerated claims for Butler as a scientific thinker. Thus, in a little book by Mr. Joad, the whole point of which is that it should be informative, if not educative, one is told that Butler made " an original contribution to the theory of Creative Evolution on the biological side, the inspired audacity of which places him second to none, not even to Darwin himself, among the pioneers of the nineteenth century ". The statement is absurd. Butler was a man of great cleverness and intelligence, with a mind of considerable, but curiously limited, originality. When, in his prime, he applied his mind to the problem of evolution—at the moment when Darwinism was carrying all before it—he achieved two things. He subjected the Darwinian theory,

particularly with regard to natural selection, to a very salutary criticism. He struck out for himself a highly ingenious theory that the offspring is one in personality with its parents, that instinctive and habitual actions are performed through unconscious memory of what we did in past generations when we were in the persons of our ancestors, and that evolution is due to variations which have been caused by the wants and endeavours of the living forms in which they appear. Both these achievements were of considerable interest, but it is fantastic to apply Mr. Joad's words to them. In both cases Butler stopped short long before he had produced anything of first-class importance. He stopped his constructive criticism to go off into interminable sterile personal controversy as to whether Darwin had committed a scientific felony or Herbert Spencer given him (Butler) the credit due to him. He left his own theory in the air, one of those clever improvisations which obviously contain much which is not true, but which may contain a vague adumbration of subsequently discovered truths. That may be inspired audacity, but it does not entitle Butler to the first place among scientific pioneers of the nineteenth century.

Butler's place in literature is really not very different from his place in science. *The Way of All Flesh* is the nearest he came to writing a great book, but it misses greatness. Its cleverness and originality are very great; the drabness of its irony is tremendous; it is solid and its characters are solid. It ought to have been either one of the

great satires or of the great novels, but it is neither; it falls in between, into the place reserved for the " queer " books which one can always re-read and which always slightly disappoint one. The kink of crankiness in Butler's mind gives a kink to the book which only passion could have straightened out. But Butler was without passion. The temperature of his writing is, in fact, too low; it is cold to the touch, like something that is dead or nearly dead. Or to put it in another way, the atmosphere of his writing is like the atmosphere of the reading-room in the British Museum.

Though Butler cannot be numbered among the greatest writers, his books will probably be read by a small number of people long after many greater names are only remembered in histories of literature. In the history of English society he himself ought to have an honoured place. For he was a great iconoclast. The end of the nineteenth century was a time of breaking up, the breaking up of images and bonds and creeds and superstitions. In that salutary process of destruction Samuel Butler was one of the earliest and most efficient of the pioneers.

JOSEPH CONRAD

In the hierarchy of contemporary English literature Mr. Conrad, I think, certainly came next to Mr. Hardy and Mr. Shaw. The mentioning of those three names together calls attention to the most marked characteristic of Conrad as a writer. He was an artist, an artist in words. To compare Mr. Hardy or Mr. Shaw with Sir Thomas Browne, Jane Austen, or Henry James would be as silly as to compare a hollyhock with a pansy; if they are artists in words, they are so only as a by-product of some other activity of their brains. If Mr. Hardy is a great novelist, it is not because he is a great artist; and Mr. Shaw, though to my ear his prose is sometimes extraordinarily fine, is too many other things to be a great prose writer. But Conrad belonged to the school of the great self-conscious stylists. He never wrote a sentence which does not seem to be weighed and made with infinite care and precision, to be wrought out of the individual words with that affectionate manipulation which the born craftsman always has for the material in which he works.

It may be that the conscious deliberation of Conrad's style was due in part to the fact that he

was a Pole and was writing in a language that was not his own. It is true that he never learnt to write consistently perfect English. But his Polish birth was not the cause of, though it may have emphasized, his verbal artistry. He was one of those people who have a passion for words, for their sound and patterns, for arranging them in sentences and paragraphs so that their echoes and rhythms roll and beat and break with the thought or emotion that the writer wishes to convey. To my ear nearly every sentence in Conrad's books has this quality of craftsmanship: but it is most marked in the rather more purple passages strewn so generously through the early stories. You have only to open *Lord Jim* casually, and you come immediately on a passage like this:

> The thin gold shaving of the moon floating slowly downwards had lost itself on the darkened surface of the waters, and the eternity beyond the sky seemed to come down nearer to the earth, with the augmented glitter of the stars, with the more profound sombreness in the lustre of the half-transparent dome covering the flat disc of an opaque sea. The ship moved so smoothly that her onward motion was imperceptible to the senses of men, as though she had been a crowded planet speeding through the dark spaces of ether behind the swarm of suns, in the appalling and calm solitudes awaiting the breath of future creations. "Hot is no name for it down below," said a voice.

Some people to-day object to any one emphasizing the character of a writer's style. The important point, we are told, is not how a person writes, but what he has to say; and a distinguished

journalist gave me a severe lecture some time ago because I had been so ill-advised as to state that Mr. Forster could write well. In Conrad's case even my censorious critic could hardly object to one beginning from his art and his style. Conrad was in no sense a preacher; he can hardly be said to have had what is ordinarily called a message; politics and social questions did not appear in his books; he had no axes to grind. He was pre-eminently a writer, and, I think, within certain limits, a great writer. He belonged to the high and ancient tradition of the literary artist, of that strange and rare succession of men who do not care to fling out a bare thought anyhow for Tom, Dick, or Harry to pick up and make their own, who are not interested even in telling a story for the sake of the story, but who are interested in fitting the rhythm and pattern of thought and feeling to an intricate and delicate rhythm and pattern of words. In Conrad's best work, in *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Typhoon*, there is either no " plot " at all or at best but an incident which is made to do the duty of a " plot "; but about this incident of a young seaman's panic or about a fact or phenomenon like Africa, Conrad weaves his immensely elaborate and often beautiful structure of words.

The beauty of his prose was, of course, consistent with a message, only Conrad differed from many other writers in holding that unless the message is delivered beautifully it is not delivered with that completeness which is required of an

artist. To judge his prose as if it were a mere paste or confection of beautiful words artistically compounded would be to do him a stupid and grievous injury. He has himself described the labour and agony that went to the composition of these beautifully written books. So, too, he has spoken of the beliefs which inspired them. "Those who read me know my conviction that the world, the temporal world, rests on a few very simple ideas; so simple that they must be as old as the hills. It rests notably, amongst others, on the idea of Fidelity." In all his books, beneath the coverlet of beautiful words, lie those simple and enduring convictions, like the shapes of everlasting hills. Fidelity, courage, magnanimity, on the one hand; terror, nature, the sea, on the other—we name them, as we look at the stately row of volumes which is his legacy, without much hesitation. For he was a writer of few moods, and of narrow, if profound, sympathies. He held to his few simple ideas very tenaciously, and was content to state them again and again in book after book with little variety. Hence, as time went on, his readers began to complain of monotony and of repetition. He had said the same things before, they felt, and, as years went on, his pen grew stiff and said them a little more cumbrously. A windless calm, a tropical lethargy, seems to brood over the novels of the last decade.

One realizes this very strongly if one reads, as I did the other day, the last book written by him, *The Rover*, immediately after one of his early

stories "The Secret Sharer" in *'Twixt Land and Sea*. One approaches the task of criticizing these works, with their air of a rather austere superiority, in a mood of diffidence. It seems as if one must inevitably appear pert or impertinent to criticize eternity, the sea, and Mr. Conrad. For the elemental and the eternal, which played so large a part in his novels, became in some way a part of him, and give him that air of regarding ephemeral and smaller things and persons *de haut en bas*. At any rate, time itself appears to stand still for him, as one feels in reading *The Rover* and "The Secret Sharer" consecutively. The intensive critic could point to certain changes which have taken place between the writing of the two stories; but they are minute changes, in the style for instance, which has lost something of its elasticity, and has hardened or thickened, so that the thought and words have a slower tempo, just as the blood runs slower through the hardened and thickened arteries of old age. But in essentials, in his vision, his thoughts, and his feelings, and in the form of their presentation to his reader, no writer with twenty volumes behind him ever changed less than Conrad.

Is this changelessness a merit or a defect in him? Your estimation of his position as a writer will depend largely upon your answer to that question. At any rate, it is because the younger or youngest generation see only this eternal sameness in him that they tend to see nothing in him. And the vehemence with which many between the ages

of twenty and thirty now see nothing, or worse than nothing, in Conrad's books is, I confess, rather shocking to me. Yet there is no real reason why one should be shocked. To be always the same implies narrow limitations, and it is a commonplace to say that Conrad is a writer with a limited range. The singer of a single song, even though he be a nightingale, always runs the risk of finding an audience to whom that particular "jug, jug" does not appeal, and who will say petulantly that his song is no better than a sparrow's.

Chance was the first of Mr. Conrad's books to achieve a popular success, and, in the preface to it which he wrote for the complete edition, he tells us that this gave him a considerable amount of pleasure, because it showed him that he was not "drifting unconsciously into the position of a writer for a limited coterie", and because it confirmed his belief in the response of mankind to "simple ideas and sincere emotions". In those last words you may find the basis of Conrad's art —a few simple ideas and a few sincere emotions. In *The Rover* the ideas are, as in "The Secret Sharer", very simple, and the emotions very few and sincere. I imagine that the story grew out of Conrad's conception of Peyrol the rover's character. There he first had in his mind Peyrol, a typical Conradian character, an old piratical seaman with an exquisite sense of honour and a romantic feeling for the sea which is an undercurrent of nearly all Conrad's writings. And there

you have the Conrad song. You may not like it—in which case, you will incontinently say that he is a negligible writer. It appeals, however, to me still, and, when I hear its rhythm once more moulding the slow sentences of *The Rover*, I feel again that, within very definite limits, we have here a great writer.

But something more must be said with regard to the limitations, and none of his books shows the nature of them more clearly than *The Rover*. Having got his typically Conradian character in Peyrol, Conrad places him, for the purposes of his story, in the revolutionary France of the Napoleonic wars. And there he found another typically Conradian character, the woman Arlette, who, when little more than a child, had been dazed or half-crazed by being dragged through the horrors of massacre in Toulon. Add to these two a shadowy French lieutenant, a tragic old woman who is Arlette's aunt, and a stagy ex-terrorist, Citizen Scevola, and you have the principal characters of the story. The story itself, leading up to the heroic end of Peyrol, is a good one; the simple ideas, the landscape, the sea, the sincere but strange emotions are worked over and over again into Conrad's elaborate style and resonant prose until the whole dies away in one of those long, rolling, calm, majestic paragraphs which remind one of the end of a Greek play or the low murmur with which a great wave finally dies out on the beach. But if, with this sound in your ears, you look back over the story which you have just read, you will be a little

astonished to find that you have really been in a world of melodrama. The ideas may be simple, the emotions sincere, but they are the ideas and emotions, not of life, but of melodrama. The plot of *The Rover*, as of nearly all Conrad's stories, is melodramatic; his characters are melodramatic, for they think, feel, talk, and act melodramatically. In fact, Conrad gets his simple ideas and his sincere emotions by eliminating everything which makes life itself and the people in it so subtle, unexpected, confused, and sordid. I do not think that this is a defect in him, though it is a very definite limitation, and it accounts, I believe, for the fact that his song means less than nothing to many of the younger generation. All novelists and playwrights begin by demanding that their readers shall accept certain conventions which include their characters and the world in which their characters live. Conrad asks you to accept the convention that the world is a melodramatic world, and personally I cannot see why one should not, for the sake of his story, grant his request, just as one accepts the convention of Shakespeare or the Restoration Dramatists or Dostoevsky that their world is not to be the real world. What matters in art is not these conventions, but the use which the artist makes of them after they are accepted.

The use which Conrad made of his conventions always depended enormously upon the theme from which he started. From the point of view of success or failure, his books may, I think, be classified roughly in three divisions. In one division

you will find the successes : *Lord Jim*, *Youth*, *Heart of Darkness*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, for instance. The nucleus of all these books and stories is essentially a simple idea, the vision of a sincere emotion, like courage, fear, fidelity, at work in a world of strange but not very complex men. The psychology may be immensely elaborated, but it remains fundamentally simple, for it springs only from those " few simple ideas and few sincere emotions ". Thus there is an initial harmony between Conrad's theme and his melodramatic vision of the world. And this harmony is carried over into the form and style. The result is to my mind indubitably a work of art. You may not particularly like it; it may seem to you narrow and monotonous; the " jug, jug " may invariably be the same; but it remains a work of art.

In the second division I would put the undoubted failures, of which *Under Western Eyes* is one of the best examples. Here Conrad begins with a theme which is bound to lead to confusion and discord. It forces him to attempt something which his vision of the world and the literary form appropriate to it made him quite incapable of achieving. The plot of *Under Western Eyes* is intricately psychological and has a considerable resemblance to that of *Crime and Punishment*. The real point of the book should have been the development of the very complex character of Razumov, just as that of *Crime and Punishment* is the development of the complex character of Raskolnikov. It is interesting to observe why Dostoevsky succeeded where

Conrad failed. Dostoevsky's view of life is not spectacular, not really melodramatic. He is extraordinarily analytical and complex. He does not deal in those few simple ideas upon which the world rests. His characters grow from page to page, naturally, in complexity. He is a realist who sticks closely to life, and so his characters are complex, vivid, and real. Their thoughts and words are given in immense detail, and to read *Crime and Punishment* is to live for days within the brain of Raskolnikov. Yet the book is not merely a "psychological novel". Dostoevsky does not, like Conrad, see life as a spectacle or in flashes, but he feels and makes one feel the ideas behind things. Conrad's vision was only of moments in life, Dostoevsky's of life as an immense and intricate whole, a little ridiculous, a little mad, terribly sordid, but tremendous in passion and tragedy. He does not work in flashes or in purple patches, but in infinite detail, so that the effect is cumulative, one little detail piled upon another gradually producing in the reader an acute sense of the vastness and inevitableness of life. But Conrad has none of these qualities. He is not analytical and has no invention; he has seen life and the human soul to be simple and melodramatic, and he can use what he has seen for the purposes of his art. But outside that narrow circle he has no power either of vision or invention. Consequently, in *Under Western Eyes* his method does not work. The psychology remains static, the characters wooden and unreal, and we are left not with the melo-

drama of life, but with the tawdry melodrama of the stage.

The failure of his later novels, of *The Rover* and *Suspense* for instance, is rather different. Here there is an attempt to get back to the world and material of his earlier work. And, as I said, there is surprisingly little difference between the surface texture of his last books and of those written twenty years ago. Yet below the surface there is a real difference. Take, for example, the posthumous fragment *Suspense*. Though it shows many of Conrad's great merits, it cannot stand by the side of *Lord Jim* and the best of his earlier work. Apparently, it was begun before *The Rover*, which " was but an interlude suggested by the longer story ". It is a story of the Napoleonic Wars, the period between the first Peace of Paris and Waterloo, when Napoleon was caged in Elba. The period seems to have had a great attraction for Conrad, and he had obviously made a careful study of its history. It is a " historical novel " of the classic type, in which major and minor historical persons move somewhat stiffly among imaginary characters. Thus we have a careful portrait of Count Bubna and Lady William Bentinck at the same evening party with the hero. There is much to be said for this convention. Somehow or other, that Count Bubna, whom I remember so well hovering in Paris when fate was closing in on Napoleon in the eighth and last volume of Sorel's great history, the historically insignificant Bubna, gives a certain solidity to that

imaginary party to which the imaginary Cosmo goes in *Suspense*. And perhaps the story thrills with a little unreal reality when a typical Conradian character, the doctor, tells Cosmo what he heard from Prince Talleyrand through Montrond.

This semi-real atmosphere of the historical novel may be meretricious and artistically indefensible. It depends for its effect, one imagines, upon the possession of some historical knowledge by the reader, who, for instance, must at least know that Count Bubna did exist. Conrad uses it in this book with considerable skill. One can see how, with its help, he has made his book, in the first place, a very good story. It is an exciting story, less psychologically complicated than many of the later Conrads. Indeed, one is so interested in the question of what is going to happen that one's chief regret when it breaks off short is that one will never know. There are many people who will say that this is a proof of the book's merits. It is a proof of one merit which Conrad undoubtedly possessed, that of the story-teller; but it is still more a proof of the book's defects. Suppose we had only three or four hundred pages of *Lord Jim*. Most readers, it is true, would feel a sense of disappointment when they came to the last page at not knowing what happened, how the story ended. But there would have been a far deeper sense of disappointment, a sense of psychological and artistic incompleteness. I am interested not so much in the "story", in what *happened*, for instance, at the inquiry into the

abandonment of the pilgrim ship, as in the working of Lord Jim's mind, set in a world of other minds. In *Lord Jim*, the moral and psychological problem informs the book; it *is* the book, and that is why, if the book had remained a posthumous fragment, we should have felt disappointment not only that we did not know what happened, but that we had been left with an incomplete work of art.

I have no such feeling with regard to *Suspense*. When I am left on the last page with the hero, Cosmo Latham, obviously on his way to Elba, I am disappointed because I shall never know what happened to him there. I want to know that, but that is practically all I want to know. What happens inside Cosmo Latham's head or inside the heads of the Countess or of the doctor is of no interest. This may be explained by saying that these characters are unreal; they lack that psychological reality which was so startling in Lord Jim or Falk; but the unreality is a symptom rather than a cause of Conrad's failure. Superficially, *Suspense* has all Conrad's merits. It is constructed with immense skill and care; it is solid; it has the grand air; it is the work of an artist or craftsman who has a passion for his work. The characters are wonderfully worked over, typically Conradian. The sentences march until, every now and again, they break into the well-known rhythm:

> He surrendered to the soft and invincible stillness of air and sea and stars enveloping the active desires and the secret fears of men who have the sombre earth for their stage. At every momentary pause in his long and fantastic

adventure, it returned with its splendid charm and glorious serenity, resembling the power of a great and unfathomable love whose tenderness like a sacred spell lays to rest all the vividities and all the violences of passionate desire.

And yet, despite its solidity and seriousness, it leaves one with a strong feeling of emptiness and hollowness. I enjoy reading it, but, as soon as I have finished and begin to think critically of it, to look inside it, I have the feeling which one gets on cracking a fine, shining, new walnut, which has just dropped from the tree, only to find that it has nothing inside it. Most of the later Conrads give one this feeling. They are splendid shells, magnificent façades, admirable forms, but there is no life in them. Perhaps to write a great book two things are required: there must be a central, living idea which all through the writing of the book must be giving off radiant emanations like a piece of radium, and the author must also have in his mind the image of a form or shell which can take and hold and mould and restrain this idea. There are some writers—Mr. Wells is, perhaps, one—who have the radiant emanations, but no form or shell in which to enclose them; Mr. Conrad, in some of his early writings, had both, but, in *Suspense* and others of his later novels, he is in the opposite position to Mr. Wells, he has the form, complete and imposing, but the ideas within it have ceased to radiate, ceased to be alive.

I have written in this essay much about Conrad's limitations and defects, his failures and his failure to hold the attention of the younger generation.

Nevertheless, in the end, few novelists could count on a more faithful band of readers. It might be true that we should only be told what we had heard already, but how could we listen unthrilled to the voice which, years ago, had so moved us in *Typhoon* and *Youth* and *Lord Jim*? Moreover, the years did little to dim the intensity of that powerful, if limited, imagination; those few very simple ideas upon which his books continued to be based withstood the wear and tear of time remarkably well. And there came to be mixed inextricably with our admiration for the genius of the novelist a more personal feeling of delight in his integrity, and gratitude for his example, which no other living writer, with the single exception of Thomas Hardy, has excited to the same extent. He held the honour of his art very high. In an age not notable for such loyalty, that leaf shines out, and will continue to shine, among his laurels.

A TRAVELLER IN LITTLE THINGS

It is a good many years since someone wrote and told me that *The Purple Land*, by W. H. Hudson, was a work of genius. At that time Hudson was practically unknown, and he remained in the same condition for a good deal longer, an author whom a very small band of readers considered to rank near Conrad and among the best contemporary English prose writers. Now time and death have played their old trick, and for the one man who could see the beauties of Hudson's prose in 1896 there are thousands in 1926.

It is difficult to see how Hudson took so long to become a popular writer. One cannot think of him without also thinking of Conrad, for the resemblances in their subjects, outlook, and methods are deep and wide. The appearance of these two writers in the nineties of the nineteenth century and the tens of the twentieth has always seemed to me a strange phenomenon. In those years there was in full swing the fashion among writers, supposed to derive from Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells, of caring only for what you had to say, and not a fig for how you said it. It seemed as if the *art* of English prose writing had been left one solitary

refuge on English soil, the house of a distinguished American who wrote at Rye in Sussex long novels which very few people could read, and still fewer could understand. But Henry James, although an artist, was more modern than Mr. Shaw and Mr. Wells, and that is why he is the sacred or secret fount from which the super-moderns draw a good deal of their inspiration. And in this atmosphere Conrad and Hudson suddenly began to write prose in the classical tradition; they were "artists in words" in the old-fashioned sense; they wrote in paragraphs and sentences, and you cannot miss the relish with which each turned upon the tip of his pen the sound of these sentences and paragraphs. It seems to me strange that these two writers, so solitary in their generation as artists, should have gone to or come from the wild and exotic parts of the world, and should have found in them and in "Nature" the only congenial subjects for their highly sophisticated, and often elaborate, prose.

I can understand why it took so long for Conrad to reach the heart or mind of Mudie's Select Library. *Lord Jim* is not an easy book to read, and a very elaborate style and elaborate psychological analysis are not good passports to popularity. Conrad would always have had more readers if he had followed the precept of a popular authoress who, when I rashly mentioned Jane Austen in her presence, haughtily replied: "I do not read the classics; they spoil one's style". But Hudson did not suffer from the same kind of merits as Conrad.

His style is extremely simple; his ideas are frequently subtle and " queer ", but rarely elaborate or complicated; his chapters and sentences are short and make no undue strain upon the attention. There is no book of his, except possibly *A Crystal Age*, which is not very " easy " reading. Then the subjects are those which, I should have thought, appeal to an immense number of people: strange human beings and birds and beasts, English villages and far-off lands, little girls and boys, and exciting adventures. And all that he writes is very clearly marked by the charm of his personality, so that you feel at once admitted to the intimacy of this queer, gentle, bird-like, intelligent, and mystic creature.

Now I find it difficult to see why it has taken so long for this " demand for the works of W. H. Hudson " to grow. *Idle Days in Patagonia* was published thirty years ago, and apparently all that time no reprint or cheaper edition was called for. Publishers will often tell you that the public does not like books about India and other " foreign parts ". I very much doubt this statement. India has not stood between Mr. Kipling and popularity; and Conrad has come into his own, although his stories are laid in the East or on the Congo. And so I do not believe that it was South America which stood between Hudson and the reading public of the 'nineties. The cause, I suggest with some hesitation, must be sought elsewhere, in Hudson's solitariness and in his curious philosophy, the kind of ruminating philosophy which often afflicts soli-

tary men in desert places. " I see ", said the commercial traveller to Hudson in the Bristol hotel, " you are a traveller in little things ", thinking, no doubt, as Hudson says, of haberdashery or floral texts for cottage bedrooms. Hudson leapt upon the label and adopted it for himself and for the title of one of his books, for, with the little symbolic twist, it appealed to the gently humorous attitude which he sometimes adopted towards himself. And the label is a good one: Hudson was a traveller in little things, in the little ways of little birds and little girls, the small idiosyncrasies of animals and human beings, and above all the little ripples on the surface of what he took to be his own soul.

There is no reason why the literary traveller in little things should not be popular, and, if Hudson had stuck to that line only, with his charm, style, and skill, he would probably have not had to wait so long for recognition. But he was incorrigibly meditative and philosophic. The little things with which he began so often led him on to meditate upon very large things. The habit is not unusual among intelligent people who live much alone with " Nature ", or who spend many years " conversing with wild animals in desert places ". Read Hudson's disquisition on snow or the colour of people's eyes in *Idle Days in Patagonia*, or on trees or on religion in *Far Away and Long Ago*, and you will see that even a commercial traveller, if he read them, could not suspect the writer of travelling in haberdashery. Here we have been taken ever so far from the little birds and girls,

from the excellent story of the old dog, Major, from the superb sketches of Englishmen and gauchos in *Far Away and Long Ago*; we have been carried into immensities and dropped into profundities in which—though to me they have great charm and fascination—I must admit, the solitary author himself seems often to get out of his depth. But the charming, gentle, meditative traveller in little things was only one side of Hudson; there was unfortunately another side of him which is revealed in his letters to Mr. Edward Garnett. When I first read those letters, they came as a surprise and a shock. They gave me a quite unexpected view of Hudson's character—indeed, so much so that when I went from them to read his books again, the impression of Hudson which I had absorbed from the letters coloured my vision of the books, and I began to see certain shades and shadows in them which I had certainly never noticed before. Here is a little problem for the moralist, the psychologist, and the literary critic. I had always had a great admiration for Hudson, not only as a writer, but also as a human being. I never met him, but I have known several people who knew him, and from them I had got a very vivid picture of the man and his character. His writings only seemed to redraw more firmly the lines of that picture, the picture of a gentle, melancholy, charming, bird-like man.

The character which met me in the letters was in many ways extremely unsympathetic. The impression is not one of a gentle melancholy, but

of a rather bitter querulousness. Bitterness and severity are not inconsistent with greatness and lovableness of character, but querulousness, techiness, and all uncharitableness are. Mr. Garnett, in his introduction, seemed to foresee this criticism, and he offered certain defences of or excuses for Hudson. He suggested that the " asperity " was due to age and ill-health. There is, no doubt, a good deal in that. I must admit, that I had never realized what a very old man Hudson was. He was seventy-six when he wrote *Far Away and Long Ago*; he was eighty-two when he wrote the last of these letters to Mr. Garnett. Peevishness is, I suppose, a privilege of infancy and old age, a privilege which we have all at one time claimed and may perhaps come to claim again. But, even if inevitable, it does not add to the beauty of grey hairs. Hudson's " asperity " is extraordinarily marked in these letters, which cover the last twenty-one years of his life. It seems to colour his view of things, persons, and literature. In 1913 he writes of American society :

> It is as rotten and contemptible a society as—ours, and once more I thank the gods *we* are going to have a touch of war, the only remedy for the present disease.

A year later Hudson got his " touch of war ", and in 1915 he writes to Mr. Garnett:

> You think it a " cursed war ", I think it a blessed war. And it was quite time we had one for our purification and our [word missing] from the degeneration and rottenness which comes of everlasting peace. It was for this reason

that I prayed for war in Ireland, which would have quickly spread to England, in those hateful days when the leaders of Liberalism—now clothed and in their right minds—were frantically jeering at Ulsterism. But this war is better, and the blood that is being shed will purge us of many hateful qualities—of our caste feeling, of our detestable partisanship, our gross selfishness, and a hundred more. Let us thank the gods for a Wilhelm and a whole nation insane with hatred of England to restore us to health.

It was a shock to me to find that Hudson was one of those peevishly bloodthirsty old gentlemen, complaining bitterly of their own twinges of pain and how "damnably" cold it was at Falmouth "even by the fire", and eagerly anxious to purge us of our faults in the blood of other people fifty years younger than themselves. And his letter of 1915 is not merely a temporary outburst due to the natural exhilaration which so many men of sixty and seventy felt in the first months of war at seeing the young called up and thinking of the blood and the purification. There is a letter of his, dated January 27, 1917, when many had got a little tired of "the blood that is being shed" and had begun to doubt whether the purification had not gone far enough, which seems to show that Hudson remained of the same mind still.

Hudson's character in these letters is unsympathetic not only politically. He is continually criticizing, "severely", as Mr. Garnett says, people and books. If the criticism were merely severe, I should have nothing to say against it. But more often than not it is bad-tempered, and

sometimes—as in his remarks about Mr. Bernard Shaw—simply stupid. Mr. Garnett tries to put up a generous defence of Hudson on this count, and talks of " the largeness of his nature " setting off his malice and providing the antidote. But in the letters the antidote seems almost non-existent. And then I remembered the great charm of *Far Away and Long Ago*, and I turned to *Nature in Downland* and *The Land's End*, and I re-read them, and, though the shadow of these letters now fell across them, I could yet recapture some of the old charm in them. The explanation is, I believe, this. Hudson was a romantic. His feelings were only aroused when some thing or person had for him been covered by the cloud of romance. Animals and birds, little children, very simple or very queer people, and things far away or long ago received the halo, and he felt towards them deeply and sincerely. Everything connected with his early life in South America naturally fell within the halo's circle; his passion and sympathy were aroused, and, being a considerable writer, he was able to convey the charm which he himself felt to the printed page of *Far Away and Long Ago*. And in books like *Hampshire Days* and *Nature in Downland* it is possible to see the same process succeeding at one moment, failing at another. Hudson's essays have always appeared to me singularly uneven. Sometimes they are flat, thin, and the writing curiously lifeless, and then again suddenly you will come upon one which is full of charm and glow. In the one case, I believe, the subject has

not fallen within the romantic halo, and we have the Hudson of most of these letters; in the other case, the subject has fallen within the charmed circle, and we have again the Hudson of *Far Away and Long Ago*.

LORD MORLEY

JOHN MORLEY was an extraordinarily consistent writer. Fifty pages taken from anything written by him in the course of a long life would unfold for any attentive reader all Morley's merits as a writer, and, at the same time, not his defects—for the word " defect " is not applicable either to them or to him—but his very interesting limitations. He has always seemed to me a remarkable and rather puzzling " case ", for both as a writer and as a thinker in the realm of history, and in that middle kingdom between history and politics, he is so good up to a point that it comes as a surprise on finishing one of his books or on looking back over his now finished achievement to find that that point is not higher than it is.

At the time of his death I happened to be reading a new volume in an edition of his works which was then being published, *Politics and History*. The essays in this volume had all been written at a time when age might have been expected to leave its mark upon the writer. The earliest was written when Morley was sixty, and the most important when he was seventy-four. Yet I can find no trace here of old

age having laid its crabbed finger upon the style, or of its having loosened the intricate mechanism of thought. After finishing the book I re-read some of the *Diderot*, which was written when Morley was forty; and the merits of that book seemed to me just as cleanly and vigorously manifest in these essays. I read the essays with much more than ordinary care and attention—it is, as I shall explain, necessary with all Morley's writing—and I think that I can vouch for the fact that there is only one sentence which the most hypercritical critic could pick a hole in on the ground of style. Every sentence is "written", vigorous, precise, absolutely clear. The thought is never loose, "sloppy", or thin. Some of the papers were originally given as addresses, yet there is not a trace of verbiage or rhetoric in them—an achievement in itself most remarkable. Then, too, every point which Morley takes up and deals with is interesting and important, and what he has to say about it is interesting and important, for in his brain he had at his command a quick and sharp instrument, and he was always trying, both in history and politics, to get below the obvious surface.

One could quote many good things from Morley, sentences of terse and epigrammatic wisdom, thoughts to which time and learning—a long and wide experience of men and books—have given a distinguished flavour which reminds one of the flavour of old wine. If one wished, one might quote and praise and praise and quote, and so end, having performed the pleasant duty enjoined upon

us in the Apocrypha. But I am at the moment concerned with something else; I am interested to discover why, with these qualities and these very great merits, Morley stops short of the highest. It would be hypocrisy to talk of him either as a great writer or a great thinker; the real truth is that he was a distinguished writer and a distinguished thinker. The interesting point is to discover what in his case drew the line between the word " great " and the word " distinguished ".

Take first the question of style. In one of his essays, called *Words and their Glory*, Morley states the qualities which in his opinion the writer should aim at: " Besides the fundamental commonplaces", he says, " about being above all things simple and direct, lucid and terse, not using two words where one will do—about keeping the standard of proof high, and so forth—let me commend two qualities —for one of which I must, against my will, use a French word—Sanity and *Justesse* ". Here, at least, is a man who practised what he preached, for it would be impossible to find a better analysis of the qualities of Morley's own style. And I am the last person to belittle those qualities; they are the foundation of good writing. And yet the thing only has to be stated in this way for one to see that certainly something has been omitted which might conceivably turn good into great writing. In Lord Morley's own case I can only suggest that the omission was some kind of imaginative passion, some power of letting a part of the mind go while the rest of it—the part which is concerned with

simplicity, directness, lucidity, terseness, sanity, and *justesse*—remains tautly under control.

The question of Morley's place as a political thinker is not so simple. Everyone who has read his works carefully must have noticed one puzzling thing about him. He is a very "difficult" writer; and yet on the surface there seems to be no reason why he should be difficult. The thought in every sentence—and in every paragraph—is perfectly clear and is clearly expressed, and yet—I can only speak from personal experience—after reading two or three paragraphs one is continually having to pull oneself up and go back and re-read them because, though one has understood every sentence, one has lost the drift or direction of the writer's thought. It is only if you hang on like grim death to what Morley is saying that you suddenly see the reason of this difficulty. When Morley begins a paragraph there is a perfectly definite connection of thought between his second and his first sentence, rather less between the third and second, still less between the fourth and third, and so on, until after a paragraph or two there is only the thinnest of mental links between the stage at which he has arrived and the stage from which he started. Those psychological characteristics which moulded his style were also the cause of this mental habit. In an essay on Guicciardini he remarks that the ideal publicist is one "whose propositions" are "guarded by temperance, reserve, common sense, and all the qualifications of practice". Here, too, he practised what he preached. The difficulty of following his

thought is ultimately due to the fact that he is always guarding and qualifying his propositions, that he rarely makes any general statement without immediately turning round to see whether, in fairness, something cannot be said on the other side. It would be silly to deny the immense value of such temperance, open-mindedness, and scrupulousness. Combined with suppleness of mind and considerable learning, they made Morley one of the most distinguished of nineteenth-century publicists. But in his case these qualities were pushed to such extremes that they inhibited his thought, preventing him from passing from the sphere of the distinguished to that of the great thinker. For even thought, if it is to be great and original, must have some passion behind it.

MR. GEORGE MOORE AND THE CRITICS

The professional critics seem to me nearly always to be taking Mr. George Moore in the wrong way. If you read old numbers of *Punch*, you will find that it must have been quite a common thing for Victorian old gentlemen to call a policeman if a small boy put his tongue out at them on the king's highway. That was an idiotic thing to do, and I am tempted to draw from it some profound reflections upon the social psychology of an age which was finally and fitly destroyed by the late war. I doubt whether there is a single old gentleman in London who to-day would pay any attention—far less think of a policeman—if a street-boy put his tongue out, and the result is that there is no small boy in London who ever thinks it worth his while to put his tongue out at old gentlemen.

Now the first thing to remember about Mr. Moore is that he has in one half of his brain the mentality of the extinct street-boy. He cannot resist being naughty, and his naughtiness takes the form of going to Messrs. Heinemann and getting them to produce a wonderfully chaste-

looking volume on hand-made paper, bound in white vellum and Michallet grey paper, and then of putting his tongue out at the professional critics and elderly gentlemen on every other of its immaculate and extremely expensive pages. Whereupon all the critics and old gentlemen pull long faces, summon the literary and critical policemen, and, to Mr. George Moore's obvious delight, read him a solemn lecture. I am not, of course, here referring to Mr. Moore's more blatant naughtinesses, his " bad taste " and calculated improprieties and indiscretions; such things eventually lose their freshness, their interest, and their power of irritating, so that now the old gentlemen have grown as tired of condemning them as have Mr. Moore's admirers of reading them. No one now thrills or shudders, sniffs or sniggers, when Mr. Moore starts on the story of an *amour*, or the private history of one of his mildly distinguished circle of literary and artistic friends —we turn the pages with a more rapid hand and a rather skipping eye, until once more we catch the word " Balzac " or " Hardy " or " Keats ".

But here, again, one should remember and guard against the naughty little boy in the one half of Mr. Moore's brain. It seems to me really to be a little ridiculous to begin calling a policeman because Mr. Moore says that Keats is only "a pussy cat on a sunny lawn", or that Mr. Hardy has only produced " ill-constructed melodramas, feebly written in bad grammar ". " Imagine," says one of our best literary critics, " imagine your

feelings if a venerable writer, for whom you had an admiration which prevented you from being visited by the humour of Ham, told you that what strikes him most about Keats is a resemblance to a curled and comfortable cat." Well, I have searched my heart, and I must confess that I find that I feel absolutely nothing at all—which is exactly what I should feel if to-morrow I were to meet an antediluvian street-boy, the relic of a departed age, and he were to put his tongue out at me.

But there is another side to Mr. Moore and another half of his brain which the critics nowadays hardly mention, but which can be taken seriously. Somewhere Mr. Moore says: "I cannot write, I can only think." He is, of course, like so many artists and men who are not artists, completely mistaken about his own powers. He cannot think—he has never been able to think—but he can write. If people would only not listen to and worry themselves about what he says, and would give their attention to the way in which he is saying it, they would then observe that he is that very rare thing in English letters—a "pure artist". He is, I think, often extremely amusing; every now and then he shows a sudden gleam of that shrewdness and imagination which is so characteristic of people who cannot think; but these things are accidents, by-products of his real interests and activities, which are concerned with words and form. I do not think that *Conversations in Ebury Street*, for instance, is among the most successful

of Mr. Moore's books—it certainly never reaches the level of the great trilogy of reminiscences or of *Avowals*—but every page of it shows that the writer is an artist in words. And the achievement is both rare and enjoyable—sentences which flow with a rhythm and beauty of their own, forming themselves, under Mr. Moore's patient and anxious guidance, so easily and yet so elaborately into the formal scheme of his paragraphs and the larger pattern of his *Conversations*.

Mr. Moore's material is not thoughts, but words. Behind even his most pert and perverse critical *obiter dicta* he has a solid foundation, if you once admit the premise, which he has, of course, arrived at instinctively, not by reason, that in literature the only thing which matters is the words and form. " My admiration for Landor is without limit; I place him above Shakespeare. . . ." The judgement is perfectly sound if you accept Mr. Moore's standards of literary excellence. Landor is a " pure artist " and a conscious artist in a sense in which Shakespeare was not; he achieves a formal perfection which Shakespeare never achieves, while into Shakespeare's " art " there enter those fiercely disturbing elements which must distress Mr. Moore as much as they distressed the " pure artists " of the eighteenth century. If Shakespeare distresses Mr. Moore, Mr. Moore's opinion of Mr. Hardy has distressed the critics. But why? If you ignore his naughtinesses, the residual judgement springs quite naturally from his literary taste. Mr. Hardy sinks so low for pre-

cisely the same reason that Landor soars so high. Mr. Hardy is sometimes a great writer, sometimes a bad writer, never a great artist—but I doubt whether Mr. Moore could understand the distinction. For him a man must either be an artist, and a conscious artist, or nothing at all. And so he applies to Mr. Hardy a meticulous verbal test which is both amusing and illuminating. And he is perfectly right. From Mr. Moore's point of view, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is " an ill-constructed melodrama, feebly written in bad grammar ". But the illumination which comes from this criticism is reciprocal; Mr. Moore's analysis of Mr. Hardy throws as much light upon Mr. Moore as it does upon Mr. Hardy. If there are terrible pitfalls in the path of a writer who neglects art and grammar, there is a desert of self-complacency and futility into which the " pure artist " may unconsciously wander. " Literature absorbed me," says Mr. Moore, " and mayhap I got as much from it as I should from a collection of Chelsea china and Louis-seize clocks." Many a true word has, unfortunately, been spoken in jest.

THE MODERN NIGHTINGALE

Poetry is probably nearer than any other branch of literature to what may be vaguely defined as the spirit of the age, or perhaps a little more concisely as the creative spirit of the age. If I wanted to know something about the intellectual and spiritual potentialities of a period, and of the direction in which they were moving, I should first read its poets. The reason may be that a poet must always be more naked and direct than a prose writer. Hopefulness, enthusiasm, energy, the feeling which from time to time sweeps through human society that it has only to stretch out its hand for the golden fruit, are instantly felt by and reflected in the poets; when the cold winds of doubt and disillusionment blow through the world, the first to shiver and freeze up are the poets. This accounts for the fact that modern poetry presents far greater difficulties to the conscientious critic than prose, whether the essay, the short story, or the novel. We live in an age of doubt and disillusionment, and our poets have either been frozen in or are struggling against the ice and cold. The more "modern" the poetry, therefore, the greater the difficulty for the critic. Here, may be, there suddenly pops up something

which is obviously meant to be a serious poem, but which, at first sight and on ancient standards, has no form, no rhythm, no rhyme, no meaning. It is easy to put on the black cap, and, calling on the names of Alfred Tennyson and William Wordsworth, to pronounce all this nonsense and not poetry. And yet every now and again one feels that such pontifical condemnation is only age and mental inertia taking the line of least resistance—*i.e.* the line of resistance to everything which is new and difficult to understand.

The struggle between the past and the future over the tradition which 99 per cent accept and 1 per cent are trying to break away from is always going on in literature, but it is peculiarly acute in the glacial periods of human progress. To-day English poetry seems to be in a bad way. On the one side you have a large number of people conscientiously writing what is traditionally poetry; it may be, and often is, written with great talent and distinction, but it answers to nothing which is alive in the living world, and the consequence is that practically nobody can be found to buy or read it. It is typically the poetry of a glacial period. On the other side are the revolutionaries, the writers who feel that what they want to say cannot be said in the old poetic forms, and who are trying to find new poetic forms and methods to express whatever is alive in their minds and in other people's minds to-day.

The critic inevitably finds himself upon one side or the other. Mr. Drinkwater, for instance,

himself a distinguished and successful poet, when he writes on the question of modern poetry and on poets ancient and modern, is all for tradition. There is sometimes sound sense in what he says, and his criticism of the ancients is interesting, if a little trite and obvious. But his attitude towards the young revolutionaries in his own poetic territory immediately puts me on the side of the poetic apes and Bolsheviks against Mr. Drinkwater and the angels. Mr. Drinkwater is on the side of tradition. I do not object to this; I see no reason why a man to-day, if his mood and mind happened to be turned that way, should not write great poetry in the direct line of tradition from Chaucer to Swinburne. But when Mr. Drinkwater goes on to say that the modern poet *must* write his poems in the traditional forms, that there is something lacking in his poetic " equipment " if he cannot say what he wants to say in the traditional five-foot iambic line, this seems to me, with all respect, *a priori* nonsense. *A priori* it is obvious that Mr. T. S. Eliot or Miss Edith Sitwell may have something to say which will not go into the traditional forms approved by Mr. Drinkwater, just as Shakespeare found that he had things to say which would not go into the blank verse of Kyd or Marlowe—and the history of literary criticism is full of examples of poets, execrated by contemporaries as Bolsheviks and the breakers of tradition, who have provided the traditional forms of the next generation.

I have said that I see no reason why a man should

not write good or great poetry to-day in the traditional forms and method, if his mood and mind were turned in that direction. But experience shows that it is extraordinarily difficult to do so, and, in fact, that no one is succeeding in doing so. Poetry on the old lines, which ran from the eighteenth through the nineteenth century, seems to have come to the end of a blind alley. The poet who tries to proceed further on those lines finds himself up against a brick wall. The poetic tradition will not fit the kind of thoughts and feelings which are alive in him and his unfortunate generation, and, if he forces himself to speak in their language, he merely repeats what they have already said. This is the reason why the achievements of those poets who write their poems in the traditional forms is so much lower than that of contemporary novelists, essayists, biographers. I do not think that anyone who has had a wide experience in reading published and unpublished modern poetry will dispute the statement that its standard is markedly lower than that in any other branch of literature. At the top are a dozen or more writers of poems who are conscientious, serious, and skilful, but uninspired; their work is not in the same category as that of Mr. Shaw, Mr. Wells, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Lytton Strachey, Mr. E. M. Forster, or half-a-dozen other prose writers. Below them is an immense company of people with varying degrees of poetic sensibility beating against a wall of ice; and below those again are as large a company of strange people who are trying to write poetry without any

qualifications for that arduous task—in fact, their efforts can only be compared with those of a one-armed man trying to play golf with a Rugby football and a billiard-cue.

It has sometimes seemed to me that poetry would be greatly benefited if poets would adopt a self-denying ordinance, a fifteen-year moratorium for poetry. The poetic currency has for many years been subjected to an appalling system of inflation; it is now thoroughly debased; under those circumstances the only cure is a moratorium. The poet to-day is in an impossible position. He may sit down at his table in the finest poetic fury, but once he takes his pen in hand, " poetry " is inevitably too much for him, and, before he knows what he is doing, he is handing out the old, worn, worthless coins, the flimsy, greasy poetic notes that issued years and years ago from the *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language*. The only cure for this state of things is for poets to agree not to write any poetry for at least fifteen years—after that interval it may be possible for someone to start afresh.

The trouble at the moment is, I think, this. There is a frame of mind which nearly everyone at one time or other may get into, and which is akin to what may be called " the poetic frame of mind ". In early spring, on a fine summer evening, in early love, in grief at the death of a favourite dog, at the outbreak of a great war, anyone may feel it. Fortunately — or unfortunately — dead

poets have left us an infinite number of formulæ of rhythms, rhymes, poetic phrases into which such feelings can be translated. The effect is disastrous upon the person who sits down to write poetry. Teresa Hooley sees a butterfly, and the formula is to hand :

> To-day I saw a butterfly,
> The first-born of the spring
> Sunning itself upon a bank—
> A lovely tawny thing.

The Earl of Sandwich tells us:

> I fancy once I may have been
> A primrose in a wood,
> To venture into your demesne,
> A violet's that stood
> For modesty. . . .

A fine summer day, and Mary E. Drinkwater sings:

> Roses shed their fragrance
> In the summer heat,
> Conjuring up romances
> Which on the senses beat.

This frozen mechanical poetry of a tradition which has lost its meaning for the life of the present generation is to be found also among those whose feet are far higher up the ladder to Parnassus than Teresa Hooley's and Miss Drinkwater's. A particular instance of it may be found in the " adjective disease ". The adjective has, of course, always been the biggest pitfall of poets,

and of many prose writers, and the quickest way of telling a poet's quality is to watch his adjectives. But the adjective disease, thanks perhaps to Tennyson and Swinburne, has become peculiarly virulent in modern poetry. The worst form which the disease takes is when a writer of real talent slips unconsciously into the habit of putting the whole of such poetic feeling as he has into his adjectives, of thinking (unconsciously) that poetry consists in finding " poetic " adjectives for nouns. Open Rupert Brooke at random and you find in a single verse " warm perfumes ", " dark scents ", " dim waves ", " ancient skies ", " murmurous soft Hawaiian sea ". Or turn to his " The Great Lover ", and note in the first few lines " desire illimitable ", " perplexed and viewless streams ", " unthinking silence ", " drowsy Death ", " immortal praise ", " high secrets ", " inenarrable godhead ". In my opinion there is no poetry in these lines at all apart from the adjectives, and the adjectives are merely " poetic ", that is to say, they have poetic associations. It would be extraordinarily interesting to dissect out the " poetry " in Brooke's poem " Waikiki ", and compare it with that in perhaps the best of the Poet Laureate's poems, " Winter Nightfall ", in which none of the poetry attaches itself in any way to the adjectives. Compare, for instance, Brooke's four lines:

> And dark scents whisper; and dim waves creep to me,
> Gleam like a woman's hair, stretch out, and rise;
> And new stars burn into the ancient skies,
> Over the murmurous soft Hawaiian sea,

with Mr. Bridges's:

> The soaking branches drip,
> And all night through
> The dropping will not cease
> In the avenue.

Brooke's lines are pseudo-poetry; they attempt to create an atmosphere of poetry by the use of adjectives with " poetic " associations; leave out the adjectives and the meaning remains exactly the same, the only thing which happens is that the " poetic " atmosphere vanishes. In Mr. Bridges, on the other hand, there is only one adjective, and that is not poetic, it is an important addition to the meaning—the branches are soaked with rain and so drip; the removal of the adjective disturbs the meaning, but has no more effect upon the poetic atmosphere than the removal of any other word.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not say that no great poetry contains poetic adjectives. Keats, with his " beaded bubbles winking at the brim, and purple-stained mouth ", his " verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways ", his " magic casements ", and his " perilous seas ", is here to disprove any such statement. But the use of these epithets by Keats is very different from that of the poetic adjective by modern poets. They always add something to the meaning, or more often to the visualized area which the lines call up before our mind. Compare, in this respect, " beaded bubbles " or " purple-stained mouth " with " dark

scents " or " dim waves ". Still more instructive is it to compare Keats'

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves

with Brooke's

Over the murmurous soft Hawaiian sea.

In Brooke " murmurous " adds nothing to the meaning of the line; that the Hawaiian sea murmured is entirely irrelevant; the word is introduced because of its poetic associations, because the murmur of the sea is the sort of thing which poets have written, and ought to write, about, because while the word " sea " is not necessarily poetic the words " murmurous sea " are. But in Keats the word " murmurous " is an immense addition to the meaning of the line, it is a vital addition to the oral vision (if one may use the expression) which the line calls up; it is not generalized poetic association, but a poetic flash illuminating in a peculiar way something particular in the poet's meaning.

The adjective disease is only a particular instance of the mechanicalism which an uncongenial poetic tradition imposes on the would-be poet. The mind of our age is not poetic in the traditional sense, and the poet who tries to be poetic becomes mechanical. The man who is to write real poetry to-day finds himself forced to become a revolutionary, to break with the tradition of the "poetic " and to find new " poetic " forms which fit the new thoughts and feelings which are alive in his mind. You can see this process at its best in the poetry of Mr. T. S. Eliot.

To the Victorian and to most of his ancestors the poet was a nightingale. The bird and the man did but sing because they must, and, though the song might be sad, it must also be sweet—indeed, the sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought. We have changed all that: Mr. Eliot, who is a long way the best of the modern poets, makes his nightingales sing

> " Jug Jug " to dirty ears,

and tells us how

> The nightingales are singing near
> The Convent of the Sacred Heart,
>
> And sang within the bloody wood
> When Agamemnon cried aloud,
> And let their liquid siftings fall
> To stain the stiff, dishonoured shroud.

The dirty ears and the liquid siftings are now as essential a part of the nightingale's song as the magic casements, the perilous seas, the verdurous glooms, and the winding mossy ways.

The revolution which has so sadly upset the poetic nightingale may be studied with profit in Mr. Eliot's poems. Personally I *like* Mr. Eliot's poems so much that I am afraid of appearing exaggerated in criticizing them. When I get a book of his into my hands I become fascinated; I simply cannot stop re-reading the poems until something physical from outside forces me to shut the book. Naturally I think that there is something rare in the book itself to cause so rare a reaction. In the

first place I believe it to be poetry, for real poetry is very rare. Mr. Eliot is a real poet. That he is difficult to understand, I admit; and this difficulty will cause many people to miss the poetry. But if anyone will read the opening of " The Waste Land ", and the whole of " Gerontion ", without fussing very much about whether or not he is understanding exactly what the author means, he will suddenly be amazed and delighted by the mere beauty of the poetry:

> Here I am, an old man in a dry month,
> Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain.
> I was neither at the hot gates
> Nor fought in the warm rain
> Nor knee deep in the salt marshes, heaving a cutlass,
> Bitten by flies, fought.

Secondly, Mr. Eliot has not only got the poetry, but he has found the instrument, the tune, the measure, the method which exactly fit the singing of " Jug Jug " to dirty ears. I feel the spirit of 1922 moving in " The Waste Land " more violently and potently than in any other contemporary poem: the spirit of the age is breathed into it much as the spirit of 1850 was breathed into " In Memoriam ".

I have admitted that Mr. Eliot's poetry is difficult to understand, but I admit it with so many qualifications that the admission is valueless. I am sure that I understand every poem which Mr. Eliot has written; I could not tell you exactly what every word and line mean, but that is not necessary for an understanding and appreciation

of the poems. In fact, the real criticism of Mr. Eliot is that he is too easy to understand, because he is always saying the same thing in different ways. His method, which alone involves obscurity, consists in keeping two tunes going at the same time, often one against the other. First, he works persistently through allusions: in the simplest case four words, lifted from Shakespeare and inserted in a poem called " Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar ", evoke the image of Cleopatra and how her barge burned on the water, an image which is flung in the face of the Princess Volupine, the " Chicago Semite Viennese " Bleistein, and Sir Ferdinand Klein. Secondly, he attempts to communicate rather subtle emotions by the crude and violent juxtaposition of discordant scenes, thoughts, emotions. My only criticism of him is that the theme which he plays on these subtle strings is always the same and is very old. The splendour and romance of our desires and imaginations, the sordidness of reality—that is the theme of Prufrock, of Sweeney, of Burbank, of The Waste Land, of the Hollow Men. The nightingale never sings anything but " Jug Jug " to dirty ears. The mind is eternally " aware of the damp souls of housemaids sprouting despondently at area gates ", while eternally looking for the barge of Cleopatra burning all day upon the water. The end of life is " an old man driven by the Trades to a sleepy corner ", with " thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season ", and the world when it ends, will end " not with a bang but a whimper ".

This monotony of a single note in the song of the best of our modern nightingales may be an ominous sign. There are other disquieting symptoms in the most " modern " modern poetry. I do not include unintelligibility, which is one of its most persistent symptoms. Miss Edith Sitwell, for instance, is one of the most modern of poets, and her meaning often escapes me, but that is no reason for dismissing her. Plainly, she has something to say, or sing, which she can only say, or sing, in her own manner. One of her poems, " Colonel Bantock ", ought to prove this to the most biased, and it ought also to prove that she is a genuine poet whose poetry can only come out through the form and manner which she has elaborated for herself.

I see, however, two dangerous symptoms in the poetry of Miss Sitwell and the genuine younger poets who are breaking with tradition. There is a tendency in modern poetry continually to be pulling us up with a jerk—a tendency against which in itself I have nothing to say. Mr. Drinkwater maintains that it is a good thing to call the sky blue; the moderns will call it, not blue, but green or hedonistic. Now the startling can become just as mechanical as the obvious, and there are signs in Miss Sitwell's writing of mechanical mannerism and a mechanical choice of startling comparisons and incongruous epithets. Mr. Acton, too, a promising young poet, should, I think, be content to call the stars hispid only once in twenty pages. And this leads on to my second note of

warning. The bane of traditional poetry has been the adjective, the poetic adjective. The adjective ruined Rupert Brooke's poetry. It will ruin Miss Sitwell and Mr. Acton in the same way if they are not careful. They spatter their poems with fantastic adjectives and strange similes just in the same mechanical way in which the traditional poet spattered " blue " over his skies and the Swinburnian " wan " over the waves. " Bulbous clouds " and " guinea-fowl-plumaged rain " can become as tiresome as " wet winds " and " ravenous kisses ". The modern poet should ration himself in adjectives, and I am sure that, if for a time he will allow himself only one adjective to every hundred nouns, he will enormously improve his poetry. At present, I imagine, the normal ratio is 150 adjectives to every hundred nouns.

In literature, no wise man will prophesy of the future, either generally or in particular. The poetic revolutionaries, like Mr. Eliot, Miss Edith Sitwell, and several others, are trying to make poetry out of what they and their generation really think and feel, and in doing so to break through a petrified and petrifying tradition into a poetry that is alive and can grow. Whether they will succeed no one can say. Only Mr. Eliot has so far succeeded in creating anything of solidity, and it may be significant that the solid thing created by him might almost be called the poetry of emptiness. The single, sterile note of his nightingale and the too rapid symptoms of mechanicalism in Miss Sitwell may mean that our age is not tuned to any

poetry save that of the waste land where no barge of Cleopatra burns upon the waters, but the damp souls of housemaids sprout despondently at area gates. If so, the remedy once more may be a moratorium.

THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR

" THERE is too much ego in your cosmos ", says the fat German to the enraged gorilla in one of the best stories which Kipling ever wrote; and that is the refrain addressed continually by many critics to modern writers and journalists: " there is too much ego in your cosmos ". A publisher recently took occasion to read a very severe lecture to a reviewer in a weekly paper, and one of the items in the indictment was that the word " I " had appeared twenty-one times in a review of two columns. Similar criticism has been heard with regard to writers and reviewers in the columns of other papers, and it is noted with considerable disapprobation that where ten or twenty years ago an editor insisted upon the modest " we ", or enacted that somehow or other personal opinions should be expressed in the impersonal third person, he now allows his contributors to bespatter his columns with their egos.

So much for journalism. Turn now to literature and the printed book. There is a whole class of literature to-day in which the dominance of the ego would have astonished and shocked our fathers. I read in one week a book by Mr. E. V.

Lucas called *The Luck of the Year* and another by Mr. Alec Waugh called *Myself when Young: Confessions*.

There are seven " I's " in the first two sentences of Mr. Lucas's book, and Mr. Waugh rarely writes a sentence which is not in the first person singular. Here is a form of writing which is essentially egotistical. Mr. Lucas is an old and extraordinarily skilful hand at it. He will write you a little essay upon the walking-stick which he has lost or the authors whom he has met, the lightest and daintiest trifle which could possibly be set before the most jaded appetite for print, and the secret of his success will be found to come from this, that he takes a rather *recherché* ego and serves it up like whipped cream in little dishes of Dresden china. Mr. Lucas belongs to the school of Charles Lamb, and good precedents can be found for this kind of literary egotism. But Mr. Waugh is an egotistical portent. Human beings have been writing books for over two thousand years, yet there is no age except that which began about 1920 in which his book could possibly have been written and published. Mr. Waugh is a very young man, and in this book he tells the world in considerable detail about himself, his life, his thoughts, and the furniture of his room; about his friends (names given in full), and their lives and thoughts; about what he said to his publisher and what his publisher said to him. I am not condemning Mr. Waugh or *Myself When Young*; it seems to me an amusing, interesting, and even courageous book, which

derives directly from Mr. George Moore. I am concerned with it at the moment only as a social and literary phenomenon, and, as such, it is, I repeat, an egotistical portent, one symptom in that deliquescence of old standards which has led on the one side to the emancipation of women, and on the other to a reviewer who uses the pronoun " I " twenty-one times in two columns. The ego in print is a very tricky and erratic thing. Mr. Waugh would have been impossible in 1850, but the egoism of regular autobiography has always been allowed. There are curious inconsistencies in our attitude towards the speaker and the writer who tells us about himself. In conversation there is no bore to equal the autobiographical bore, yet the printed autobiography is rightly among the most popular of books, because one of the most entertaining. Think of Benjamin Franklin, who must have been a supreme bore in real life. One can imagine the thin trickle of his conversation becoming, as he grew older, ever more thin, more priggish, and more wearisome. If you had seen him in August 1788, at the age of eighty-three, slowly bearing down upon you in the streets of Philadelphia or New York, you would have bolted into the nearest shop or down the first side-street, for, had he caught you, he would infallibly have made you listen as he told you " the little artifice " to which he " ow'd the constant felicity of his life " during eighty years, of his project for scavenging the streets, or of the reason why the lamps in Vauxhall burned so much better than those in

London. Yet his autobiography, which contains a full account of his "little artifice", of his scavenging project, and of the Vauxhall lamps, and which he wrote at intervals between 1771 and 1788, is a really entertaining book, and the old gentleman, who would have bored us in the flesh, is charming in print.

One of the reasons why the written autobiography is nearly always so interesting is, I think, that when a person lets himself loose with a pen on paper about his own life, he almost always gives us a pretty complete picture of his own character. You can read Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* in a few hours, and you get this complete picture of him from it. You see that he is a bore, no doubt, but because you see the whole of him, you see that this boringness is only a small part of his character. But in a few hours' conversation with a stranger, even if in that time he tell you the story of his life, it is the rarest thing in the world to get a complete view of him and his character. Face to face, individual traits become distorted and over-emphasized, and character becomes reflected in conversation very much in the way in which we see ourselves reflected in the distorting mirrors outside certain restaurants in South Coast seaside places.

There are, as we know, many wonderful things, but nothing more wonderful than man. Benjamin Franklin tells us that about the year 1730 "I conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection". Believing that he knew what was right or wrong, he thought that

it should prove easy " always to do the one and avoid the other ". However, he soon found that " I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined ". While concentrating upon the avoidance of one kind of fault, he was often surprised to find himself committing another, and he therefore contrived, apparently with success, the following method of obtaining " a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct ". He determined after considerable reflection that the number of virtues was thirteen: temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquillity, chastity, and humility. The method which he contrived for acquiring " the *habitude* of all these virtues " was as follows:

> I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I rul'd each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I cross'd these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

He made his attack upon the virtues one by one, concentrating, for instance, first upon temperance and allowing the others, from silence and order to chastity and humility, to look after themselves. Then, when he had acquired the virtue of temperance, he went on to that of silence, and so on throughout the list until eventually he arrived at " moral perfection ". " I was surpris'd ", he

tells us, " to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish." Indeed, only one of the virtues seems to have given him any serious trouble: he learnt to " eat not to dullness, drink not to elevation " ; he broke himself of the habit " of prattling, punning, and joking " ; he taught himself to waste nothing, to cut off all unnecessary actions, to be clean " in body, cloaths, and habitation ", to be chaste except " for health or offspring ", and to " imitate Jesus and Socrates ". The one virtue which he failed to acquire was Order; he never succeeded in learning to put things and papers away in their proper places:

> In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it.

Benjamin Franklin, with that little book in his pocket, marking each day the little black dots—he gives us a sample page in which there are seven black dots in one week against the virtue of Order—is a charming character, I think. We forgive him his egoism and his boringness, indeed we forget them, because he displays so vividly and so completely his own curious ego. And that brings me back to the hostility shown towards those who do display their egos in print.

A good deal of the objection to the use of " I " in literature and journalism comes from unreasoning convention, and is in fact unreasonable. It is absurd to believe that to write " Mr. Smith's latest

novel is a masterpiece", or "we think Mr. Smith's latest novel is a masterpiece", is more respectable than to write "I think Mr. Smith's latest novel is a masterpiece". And yet one only has to read Mr. Lucas, Mr. Waugh, Mr. Moore, and much of modern literature and journalism to see that no written word is more dangerous than the pronoun "I". The terrible danger which the egotistical writer runs is that he may at any moment rouse in the reader's mind the thought: "There is too much ego in your cosmos". And that reflection at last brings me to a very curious fact and to the greatest of all egos in print, the ego of Samuel Pepys. There are books like the Diary and Montaigne's Essays which are one perpetual "I", and which yet never rouse that thought in any reader's mind. It is clear that the egotistical book can be either the most charming or the most infuriating form of literature. What is the cause of the charm in the one case and of the irritation in the other? Some people will say that it depends upon the character of the writer, but I do not think that this is true. There is really nothing in the character of Cellini or Casanova, or even Pepys, which can account for the fact that their egos cut such fine figures in print. The reason is, I believe, rather more subtle. As a matter of fact, it is true to say to every man that there is too much ego in his cosmos. To everyone his own ego seems to be extremely big and the egos of other people extremely small. As soon, then, as a writer begins to use the pronoun "I" and to talk about himself,

he has to face this difficulty, that his ego which appears to be infinitely important to himself will appear to be infinitely unimportant to everyone else. Whether an egotistical book is attractive or repulsive depends upon a very subtle relationship between the author and his ego. To Mr. Pepys, the most important thing in the world was Mr. Pepys, but the relationship of Mr. Pepys to his ego in the Diary is without pose, pretence, or self-consciousness. And so his ego remains there immortalized in a book, gigantic to him, minute to us, naked, unashamed, ridiculous, but fascinating because one feels that that minute something, that ego in the centre of Mr. Pepys, is astonishingly real. On the other hand, the egotistical writer who exasperates us does so by his attitude towards himself; we could forgive him for overestimating the size of his ego, but what we cannot tolerate is that that minute, ridiculous speck in the centre of him which he calls " I " should turn out to be a sham.

Holyoake, the co-operator and agitator, wrote a small book in 1895 called *Public Speaking and Debate*. It has sold steadily and largely ever since, and recently the fourteenth edition was published. I infer that there must be a very large class of persons, which I have never come across, practising the art of oratory. For Holyoake's book professes to be practical, to tell you exactly how to make a public speaker very much in the same way as a book of my childhood explained to me " How to Make a Summer House ". And the result is also not dissimilar, for both books are very entertaining to read, but only someone with a genius for making summer-houses or a born orator could make any practical use of the one or of the other.

The author of the manual on summer-houses had, I remember, an excruciatingly orderly mind, grimly concentrated upon summer-houses. Holyoake started with a very different handicap fatal to an efficient manual writer. As befitted an agitator, he had a perpetually agitated mind; he dances over the surface of his subject as restlessly as a midge upon the surface of a pond. Every time he dips down in his dance and touches his

subject, you think that he is going to draw a distinction fundamental to the understanding of it, but in a moment he is off again, leaving you in doubt whether he has ever seen the distinction. The distinction is between speech as an art and speech as an instrument. If I had to write a manual on " How to Make a Public Speaker ", I should begin by pointing out the difference between oratory and public speaking. Oratory is an art, which can exist as an end in itself like a sonnet or a symphony; public speaking is a useful instrument, intended, like a pamphlet or a plough, to serve a practical purpose. The orator's object is simply to speak, to speak winged words; the public speaker's object is not to speak but to persuade. The difference between the two is very clearly shown by the difference between Burke and Charles James Fox. Burke had a passion for the spoken word as an end in itself; his real business in life was to persuade, but once he was launched upon a speech, the art of speaking absorbed him entirely, his audience faded away and vanished, and all that he saw was a pattern and all that he heard was a rhythm of spoken words and thoughts. The result was that, since there is nothing quite so fatiguing as art, Burke at first " dazzled his hearers, then distracted them, and finished by fatiguing and offending them ". He lost his audience in his subject, and his listeners in the sound of his own words. " In the progress of a long discourse he was never satisfied with proving that which was principally in question, or with

enforcing the single measure which it was his business and avowed purpose to enforce—he diverged to a thousand collateral topics—he demonstrated as many disputed propositions—he established principles in all directions—he illuminated the whole horizon with his magnificent, but scattered, lights. Having too many points to prove, his auditors in their turn forgot that they had undergone the process of conviction upon any."

Fox was, like Burke, a man " with a great quantity of matter in his mind and a great fluency of language in his mouth ", but he used the matter and the language always for a perfectly definite and concrete object, the persuasion of his audience. Porson said that " Pitt conceives his sentences before he utters them. Mr. Fox throws himself into the middle of his, and leaves it to God Almighty to get him out again ", and the fact that God Almighty always did get him out again has led people erroneously to conclude that Fox was a " born orator ". He was not, he was a born public speaker; he left the sentences to the care of God Almighty, because he did not care very much about the sentences; the one thing that he cared about was the minds of his listeners. Words were for him only an instrument or weapon with which to impose conviction upon his audience. " Pitt ", he once said, " is never at a loss for *the* word, and I am never at a loss for *a* word ", any word, that is to say, with which he might successfully hammer his argument into the minds of his listeners. Burke lost his audience in his art, Fox found his art in his

audience, and that was why he held the opinion that a good division was the only true crown of rhetoric.

People to-day often comment upon the change in the style of oratory which has taken place, particularly in Parliament, within a generation or two. Mr. Asquith had an immense reputation in the House of Commons because almost alone among its members he addressed it in sentences which did not have to be rewritten or completed by Mr. Hansard. But the truth is not that the style of oratory has changed, but that the art of oratory has perished. Public speaking or skilled persuasion has killed oratory or the art of speaking, and practically the only survival of Burke's art is to be found in the rhetorical convention under which the public speaker ends his sentences with three nouns joined together where his whole meaning could have been expressed by one. Holyoake is not fully conscious of this change, but his book is itself a confirmation of it. For him the whole object of public speaking is persuasion. The extraordinary thing is that all through his book he appears to be under the delusion that the best way of persuading a person is to appeal to his reason. "Eloquence", he says, "is the talent of giving force to reason." In that sentence he shows that he has been taken in by the fact that public speakers use arguments and give reasons. Dr. Johnson suffered from the same delusion. He contradicted Mr. Wilkes, who had described oratory as "accompanied with all the charms of poetical expression", and said: "No,

sir; oratory is the power of beating down your adversary's arguments, and putting better in their place"; and when Wilkes, who knew what he was talking about, objected that "this does not move the passions", Johnson replied: "He must be a weak man who is to be so moved".

We know now that the world is composed of weak men. If you want to persuade men in masses, the right way to go about it is not to beat down bad arguments and put better in their place, but to "move the passions". All successful public speakers are aware that the art of persuasion consists in appealing not to reason but to passion. The fact is obscured first because there are so many unsuccessful speakers who share Holyoake's delusion and attempt to appeal to what they call reason, and secondly, because even the most successful public speaker is obliged to use arguments. The art of public speaking consists really in using arguments which do not appeal to the hearer's reason, which just keep his reason asleep and his passions awake. In its lowest manifestations this is the art of advocacy as it is practised daily in the High Court of Justice; its most exalted form and highest level were developed in the oratory of Mr. Gladstone. The man who wishes to become a successful public speaker should study not a Manual of Public Speaking, but the gifts and methods of Mr. Gladstone. You have only to read a page of any of Gladstone's speeches to discover that he was no orator. He did not practise the same art as Demosthenes and Burke, or even Cicero and

Chatham. He had none of that sense of language and words which makes possible the sudden fusion of thought and feeling into a sentence, and therefore, although he was almost incessantly making speeches for sixty years, he never uttered a sentence which any man can quote or remember. Yet he had an amazing gift of words and language, of mere fluency which is invaluable to a public speaker. Holyoake himself mentions an illuminating example of this. It sometimes happened that when Gladstone was leading the House, the Opposition would collapse and Gladstone would be called upon suddenly to wind up the debate. He would immediately begin to speak with nothing to say and with no case to answer. In such cases even the most skilled and practised speaker shows some signs of hesitation or consideration. But Gladstone was in his element; there immediately began to pour forth from his mouth a perfectly woven " texture of articulation ", a kind of " argumentative mist ", a vast nebula of words and sentences. The air, as Holyoake says, was simply " thick with words, all connected . . . with nothing ". The listeners had been privileged, if they had known it, to see or hear the raw material of Mr. Gladstone's persuasiveness. On ordinary occasions, that raw material, that vast nebula of words and sentences, was gathered up into a point and moved in a particular direction always impelled by Mr. Gladstone's will, his desire to persuade his audience. Everything else remained the same, the same argumentative mist, the same whirring and whirling of

words, the same infinite stream of articulation, but now all directed to one object, the persuasion of his audience.

The important thing to realize is that Mr. Gladstone used his argumentative mist not upon the reason but upon the passions of his audience. He himself, in describing the power and function of the orator, wrote that "the case of the orator is entirely different (from that of the poet); his work, from its very inception, is inextricably mixed up with practice; it is cast in the mould offered to him by the mind of his hearers; it is an influence principally received from his audience (so to speak) in vapour, which he pours back upon them in a flood". Now this vapour which the public speaker receives from his audience is feeling or emotions, and Gladstone is referring to that sensitiveness and responsiveness to the mood of the crowd which distinguishes all the most popular orators. He himself, we may say, received this emotional vapour from his audience and poured it back upon them in the form of an argumentative mist. Hence an immensely strong emotional contact was immediately established between the speaker and his hearers, and the orator was able to make his audience go where he wanted only because emotionally he was following them. "No one", said Bagehot, "half guides, half follows the moods of his audience, more quickly, more easily than Mr. Gladstone", and therefore, since every audience has a different "vapour", no one had developed to a greater perfection "the chameleon-like character

which we associate with a consummate advocate". The successful public speaker persuades his hearers by voicing their passions; he must use arguments only to prevent reason interfering between the crowd and its emotions. That is why the war produced such an enormous crop of successful public speakers—and so few successful generals.

HISTORY AND POLITICS

THE PAGEANT OF HISTORY

EVERY age has its own idea of history and, one must suppose, gets the history which it deserves. Even historians cannot agree upon the nature of their subject: to Thucydides history was one thing, to Tacitus another, to Gibbon another, to Mommsen, Macaulay, Acton, Sorel something in each case different. The philosophers are not more helpful, for Hegel, Croce, and Spengler each have discovered their own particular Clio. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, one may say with some confidence, history was considered to be concerned almost entirely with Kings, Queens, Princes, Constitutions, Acts of Parliament, Revolutions, Policy, Council Chambers, and Wars. It was pre-eminently "drum and trumpet" history.

It is possible to argue that the ordinary man was first discovered in 1789. At any rate, it was the French Revolution which first brought him prominently to the notice of his "betters", among whom may be counted both the makers and the writers of history. It took a little time before the common people began to invade, then to permeate, and finally almost to monopolize

history. According to Miss Eileen Power, " up to the middle of the last century the chief interest of the historian and of the public alike lay in political and constitutional history, in political events, wars, dynasties, and in political institutions and their development. Substantially, therefore, history concerned itself with the ruling classes. 'Let us now praise famous men,' was the historian's motto. He forgot to add 'and our fathers that begat us'." It was Carlyle, apparently, who began crying in the wilderness for a history which should deal, not with " Red-book Lists and Court Calendars and Parliamentary Registers ", but with " how men lived and had their being ". His cry, or the spirit of the age, was pretty effectual, and the learned Lord Acton, within a generation or two, could say that " the great historian now takes his meals in the kitchen".

Every year now an immense number of books, learned and popular, are produced which, consciously or unconsciously, adopt this view that historical knowledge can be acquired only through knowledge of the ordinary lives of ordinary people at different epochs. It is extremely interesting to examine some of the best of these books with care in order to see what vision of the past they succeed in giving to one.

A very good example is the volume[1] in which, some five or six years ago, Mr. R. B. Morgan published a series of extracts from contemporary

[1] *Readings in Social History*, by R. B. Morgan (Cambridge University Press).

writers describing the social life of England from the first century B.C. to the accession of Queen Victoria. The mere description of it calls up in one's mind the vision of a " pageant " of history, not a pageant of history in the old sense—a mere cavalcade of kings and queens and great men and " historical " events—but of history in the sense which J. R. Green was one of the first to popularize —a pageant of the ordinary man going about his ordinary work from the days when he wore woad to the time when he wore a grey beaver hat. If it were in any way possible to obtain such a vision, the panorama of ordinary life—and so, I suggest, of civilization—through nearly two thousand years of English history, it would be, one might expect, by means of an anthology of contemporary descriptions. It is, therefore, a curious fact that, after reading this anthology, one is left with hardly any vision at all. This is not the anthology's fault; as an anthology it comes as near perfection as is possible, for it would be difficult to point to a single extract which is irrelevant or uninteresting. But, on the other hand, I do not think that the fault is entirely the reader's; some of the blame must be laid upon that elusive and prevaricating Muse, Clio.

The difficulty is this. Each of the extracts works like the instantaneous shutter of a camera; for one moment it opens for us upon a picture of a particular side of social life at a particular time. It opens upon the Druids settling a dispute, or an English householder raking up the ashes on his

hearth at eight o'clock at night when the curfew rang, or Sir John Holland and Sir Reginald de Roye tilting before King Richard II., or the account book of a sixteenth-century household, or a day in the life of John Evelyn or Mr. Pepys or Wesley. Each picture is fascinating, but the composite panorama is extraordinarily confused and confusing. It seems, for instance, at moments as if you could choose a series of extracts to show that there was no fundamental change in English social history from century to century. This anthology opens with extracts from Strabo and Tacitus, and the landscape which they show us is the same which I now see through my window—" continual rain ", an " overcast sky ", though " the cold is not severe ". The climate, you may say, is not a part of social history; if you do, I disagree with you, and so apparently does Mr. Morgan—at any rate, this note of the rain and the mist recurring through twenty centuries and six hundred pages of " English History " gives one a homely feeling of an unchanging social background. Then there is the country—I had always imagined that the face of the English countryside was in the middle of the sixteenth century, before the great enclosures had taken place, completely different from what it is to-day. But in 1558 a Frenchman, travelling in England, writes:

> The country is well covered and shady, for the lands are all enclosed with hedges, oaks, and several other sorts of trees, so that in travelling you think you are in a perpetual

wood, but you will discover many flights of steps which are called in English *stiles*, and by which persons on foot go along little paths and enter the grounds. . . .

And the people who lived in the rain and mist and walked between the hedges—an Italian in 1500 writes:

. . . the English are great lovers of themselves, and of everything belonging to them; they think that there are no other men than themselves, and no other world but England; and whenever they see a handsome foreigner, they say that " he looks like an Englishman ", and that " it is a great pity that he should not be an Englishman "; and when they partake of any delicacy with a foreigner, they ask him " whether such a thing is made in *their* country? "

One could go on piling quotation on quotation until one had built up a picture of an unchanging climate, country, and population which might comfort those who see the deluge looming next week in Westminster. Of course, there are changes: Harrison tells us in Elizabeth's reign that " there are old men yet dwelling in the village where I remain which have noted three things to be marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance, and other three things too too much increased ". One was " the multitude of chimneys lately erected "; another was the use of mattresses, beds, and pillows in place of a straw pallet and a " good round log "; and the third was " the exchange of treen platters into pewter and wooden spoons into silver or tin "; while the " three things that are grown to be very

grievous " were the enhancing of rents, the daily oppression of copyholders, and the increase of usury. About the same time, it may be noted, the number of peacocks had increased in England to such an extent that it was " now a hurtful fowl by reason of their multitudes ". There are other changes: in the twelfth century a certain English knight, dreaming that " some person strangled him with his ringlets ", woke in a fright and promptly bobbed his hair. " The example spread through England; and, . . . almost all military men allowed their hair to be cropped in a proper manner, without reluctance. But this decency was not of long continuance, for scarcely had a year expired ere all who thought themselves courtly relapsed into their former style. . . ." Then there came the Black Death, and the Statute of Labourers enacted that in 1350 every man shall serve the Master requiring him; the monasteries are suppressed; John Evelyn, on January 30, 1661, notes in his diary the " stupendous and inscrutable judgments of God " in ordaining that on that day " the carcases of those arch-rebels ", Cromwell, Bradshawe, and Ireton, should be dragged out of their " superb tombs in Westminster among the Kings ", to be hanged on the gallows at Tyburn. And, finally, there is the coming of " The Rocket " and the railway, which appropriately gave Mr. Creevey a headache, and burned one hole in Miss de Ros's cheek and another in Lady Maria's silk pelisse.

There, perhaps, is the difficulty. Looked at in this fascinating anthology, the social history of England appears from one side to be almost changeless, from another an infinite series of small changes which may give a bolster instead of a log of wood to a labourer, or may burn a hole in some great lady's cheek. But the pageant seems to have vanished.

Still more about the modern Clio may be learnt from reading another book by a learned historian, Miss Eileen Power, who has specialized on the Middle Ages and gives us not a general pageant of the whole course of a nation's history, but an intensive picture of a particular epoch. Her book *Mediæval People* is, as she says, "chiefly concerned with the kitchens of History". It is extremely interesting and amusing; the common people of the Middle Ages is its subject, and it tells us how they lived their ordinary lives. Those lives are brought very vividly before us and we are shown exactly how the peasant Bodo and his wife Ermentrude spent a day of their lives on the estate of the Abbey of St. Germain in the time of Charlemagne; then we are taken on that stupendous Odyssey of Marco Polo to Kublai Khan; with the help of the Episcopal Registers, we get an extremely entertaining account of how a Prioress, like Madame Eglentyne, lived in Chaucer's time; next we go to Paris and see a housewife there in the fourteenth century, and listen to extracts from a charming book, *Le Ménagier de Paris*, in which the elderly

Ménagier gave instructions to his young wife upon how to manage him and his house. In the last two chapters we return to England and see how Thomas Betson, the Merchant of the Staple, lived in fifteenth-century England, and how Thomas Paycocke, the wealthy clothier, lived and died at Coggeshall in Essex in the reign of Henry VII.

Only a historian of very considerable learning could do successfully what is done in this book. The ordinary people, as I said, live their ordinary lives very vividly before our eyes. After reading these pages, that charming Ménagier and the stout Thomas Paycocke are real people to me, and I know the details of their daily lives as fully and as accurately as I do those of an agricultural labourer or an engineer who is my contemporary. A book like this is a real achievement, for which we owe thanks to the French Revolution, Carlyle, the spirit of the age, and, by no means least, Miss Power. If I make certain observations upon the theory of history to which I referred in the first paragraph, and if I seem to be critical of it, it is not that I do not appreciate the achievements or enjoy the products of this kind of history. Few good modern historians, of course, would claim that the details of ordinary people's lives were the beginning and end of history; yet many people might be induced to accept this false and foolish doctrine from the practice and theory of some of them. I am myself immensely interested to know " how men lived and had their being; were it but

economically, as, what wages they got and what they bought with these"; but, when Carlyle seems to imply that this is the one "great question" which the historian should answer, he seems to me to be as profoundly wrong as were the historians who saw importance only in the lives of princes, in Court Calendars, and in Parliamentary Registers. One reason why I believe this is because I believe that it is more important to know what men think than what they eat and what clothes they wear.

There are several dangers in exaggerating the significance of details in the ordinary lives of ordinary people. One is the danger of a kind of historical sentimentality. Some people seem to get a sentimental thrill from knowing that a man called Bodo was eating porridge on September 20, 924, which they do not feel if I tell them that a man called John Jones is eating porridge on September 20, 1924. This leads to a false view of history. But there is another and more subtly false view of history which even a book like Miss Power's may encourage in some minds. When she takes the peasant Bodo or the Ménagier of Paris or Thomas Betson, and "reconstructs" their lives for us, leading us in detail through the routine of a day lived by them, she is very skilfully revivifying a particular individual and the material circumstances of his existence some centuries ago. That is a valuable and delightful achievement, but it is not, I repeat, the beginning and end of history. The achievement seems to me to be more akin to

that of the biographer or the novelist than to that of the historian. Our interest in the charming old Ménagier or in Thomas Betson is the kind of interest which we feel for Scott in Lockhart's " Life " or for a character in Jane Austen. From this point of view to know what these people ate and wore is most important, for it makes them more " real " to us, more " living ". But history, I suggest, should be concerned ultimately with something rather different from the characters and charm of individuals. The historian's province is the communal life, not the individual lives, of the common people. In order to understand that communal life, he must, no doubt, know how Bodo spent his day and what the Ménagier ate and what house Thomas Paycocke built for himself in Coggeshall. But these are nothing more than the culinary ingredients which he has to mix and boil and stew in the kitchen of history—and I deny that you can understand the life of a household if you only know what goes on in the kitchen. To understand the communal life of common people, the kind of ant-heap or bee-hive which they have built up for themselves and which inexorably determines for them what kind of civilized or savage life they shall lead, you must know what goes on in their heads and in the heads of their princes and rulers.

Contemporary accounts of events, old letters, and ancient diaries give one a better idea of what went on in the heads of kings, princes, and common people than the history of their everyday lives.

The newspaper, with all its faults and perversions of truth, will open doors to the historian of five hundred years hence, doors which almost completely shut us off from the fifteenth century. The evil that newspapers do is usually on the day of their publication, the good is interred in their bones and can be enjoyed by anyone who chooses to dig them up. Few things, indeed, are more interesting than an old newspaper, and it is a curious fact that the *Times* of a year ago, if you happen to find no more than half a sheet of it, makes better reading than that of to-day. Great works and mighty tomes grow stale and out of date, but a scrap of old news or an old newspaper retains an astonishing freshness. "Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments."

If any one doubts this statement, the publication of selections from the *Fugger News-letters*[2] should convince him. To read these news-letters is, in effect, to be reading old newspapers of the sixteenth century. The story of the great family of Fugger is a romantic one. The original Fugger was a small weaver, but in the fifteenth century the family took to finance, and by 1500 it had established one of the largest and most powerful financial houses which the world has known. It performed all the functions of the great modern financial houses, covering the world with a network of branches and agents, financing Govern-

[2] *The Fugger News-Letters* (The Bodley Head).

ments and princes, and " controlling " mines and other profitable undertakings. And, like the modern financier, the Fuggers found that finance was the golden key which opened the door into the " best " society. They married the sons and daughters of the aristocracy; one of them indeed achieved the glory of marrying an Archduke. Eventually, the Emperor, who was always heavily in their debt, ennobled them, and the Fuggers became Counts.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century the House of Fugger was going downhill. It had financed the Holy Roman Empire, and the Catholic Church, and the King of Spain, and more than once its mighty debtors had repudiated their debts. At the end of the century the head of the house was Count Philip Eduard Fugger. It was he, apparently, who conceived the brilliant idea of making a vast collection of " news-letters " to be deposited in his library. The collection consists mainly of two different kinds of extract. The first are reports from agents or correspondents of the house who were scattered all over the habitable world. These correspondents act precisely as the modern newspaper correspondent: they report anything of interest which comes to their knowledge. They answer, in fact, to the " Our own correspondent " or " Our special correspondent " of the big modern newspaper. But Count Philip Eduard Fugger caused to be included in his collection a large number of news-letters similar to the reports which in our time are

supplied to newspapers by the great news agencies like Reuters. Jeremias Crasser and his successor, Jeremias Schiffle, had an office in Augsburg " where the business of editing and publishing reports from all over the world was carried on ", and they " regularly supplied Count Fugger and many other clients with their ' Ordinary ' and their ' Extraordinary ' Papers ".

One reason why these old news-letters retain their freshness and a peculiar quality of reality is that they are written on the spot by contemporaries. Here we have a report from Amsterdam, dated August 30, 1572, giving an account of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, which had taken place on August 23. A correspondent with the Christian Armada at the Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, writes off a description of it on October 8. " Cenci's children ", begins another news-letter, dated September 12, 1599, from Rome, " were executed here yesterday. The eldest son was rent asunder with two tongs, beheaded and quartered, the daughter was beheaded." . . . Emanuel Tomascon, " who was present at the happenings ", writes " an exhaustive report of the way in which Queen Mary Stuart of Scotland and Douarière of France was beheaded on the 18th day of February of the new calendar, in the castle of Fotheringay in England ".

Human nature must, in some respects, have changed very little in the last 400 years. It is remarkable to see how closely the modern newspaper correspondent follows the practice of the

sixteenth-century correspondent. The doings of royalty, for instance, are recorded here precisely in the same way as they are recorded in our daily papers. Royal weddings, whether at the Court of Philip II. in Saragossa or of the King of Poland in Cracow, are minutely described, with accounts of the processions, festivities, and dresses. Some correspondents are a little more frank and truthful than their successors to-day: when the Duke of Savoy married the daughter of Philip II. of Spain, the correspondent writes from Saragossa on the day before the wedding:

> This evening a dance will be held, and thereafter the marriage will be consummated. The bride looked on this day mightily morose. I know not, whether perhaps she is dissatisfied with the appearance of the Duke, who is small and ugly. If this be the case, she may, after the dance of this night, conceive a better liking for the bridegroom of to-morrow.

The news-letters give one an extraordinarily vivid account of what went on in the human ant-heap of the sixteenth century, and also, to a considerable extent, of what went on in the strange minds of the human ants. One knew that man was the most savage and terror-ridden of all animals, and Count Fugger's correspondents confirm the view. There is, for instance, a long report, covering four pages, of " the persons who were brought as penitents to the public *auto de fé*, held by the Holy Court of the Inquisition upon Sunday the 3rd day of May in the year 1579 ", and when the correspondent has gone through the

immense list of crimes and punishments, he ends: "Vale! I rejoice that this is at an end." The news-letters are full of massacres of Huguenots, Lutherans, Catholics, Belgians, Austrian peasants; of murders and assassinations; of beheadings and tortures. But even the battles, murders, and sudden deaths which our sixteenth-century ancestors inflicted upon one another were, probably, not as terrible as the imaginary world of superstitious horror in which they imprisoned and tortured their own minds. The world was not a pleasant place to live in four hundred years ago, and black fear was always sitting on everyone's back—not without reason. On February 14, 1581, "a noise resembling thunder" travelled swiftly over the town of Prague; this was followed at night by a sound of lamentation which the "Bohemians call 'Mother in Travail'"; naturally next day a terrible plague broke out. In 1594, at Christmas time, the dead insisted upon awakening, leaving their graves, and tormenting the living, and, though several corpses were dug up and the heads cut off, "it proved of no avail". In 1597 blood rained upon Vienna. In 1592 the Grand Master of Malta sent a report to Venice that the Anti-Christ had been born in a certain province of Babylon. The child "is reported to be covered with cat's hair and to be a dreadful sight. It began to talk eight days after its birth, and to walk after a month. It is said to have intimated that it is the Son of God." The sun grew dark at midday, mountains opened,

and the sky rained "snakes and other horrible creatures".

Here you get a glimpse into not so much the routine of everyday life as the minds of ordinary people in the sixteenth century. That is historically of the greatest importance, for it is part of the record of the history of civilization. There is another large mine of historical information which was mainly unworked by our ancestors of the nineteenth century, but which the movement away from the history of Red-book Lists, Court Calendars, and Parliamentary Registers towards that of the ordinary man has opened for us. If anything could show us how dead generations lived and had their being and could reveal to us the workings of their minds, it should be their memoirs, diaries, and letters. Every month now sees the publication of such material or of historical works based upon it. Here it seems to me that we are still dealing with the culinary ingredients of history, but with ingredients of the very first importance. The value of a contemporary record is even more marked in a diary or letter than in a news-letter or newspaper report. Take, for instance, a little book which Mr. John Beresford published the other day and which he modestly called *Gossip of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Using diaries and letters, he gives us what he calls the human side of history in a series of glimpses at the lives of a few men and women from the grim, cold January 30, 1649, through the last half of the seventeenth century to the

reign of Queen Anne. Memoirs, diaries, and letters are the back-stairs of history, and it is by lingering and listening on them that one picks up historical gossip.

Back-stairs and gossip are words that may sound depreciatory, but there is a good deal to be said for them. On the back-stairs of history people are, for the most part, much more alive than in the council chambers and on the battlefields where they are introduced to us by the solemn historian. Nothing makes me feel that the dead and the past were once living so much as the casual picture or recollection in a diary, a biography, or an old letter. When, for instance, Mr. Beresford quotes from a seventeenth-century diary: " Concerning the late our Gracious Sovereign to this day I remember, that came at night as I was wont from St. Paul's schole I found the good old Man " (the diarist's grandfather) " all in tears as who truly thought the Glory was departed from our Israel ", we get, through that vision of the small boy walking, on the evening of January 30, 1649, from St. Paul's Churchyard to London Wall, and finding the old man " all in tears ", a sudden and unexpected sense of the reality of history which our schoolmasters and historians have usually succeeded in eliminating from our minds.

There is, of course, in this feeling perhaps some of the sentimentality and false perspective which I condemned above in the man who is thrilled by Bodo eating porridge. But to feel the reality of history vividly is not quite the same as to feel

vividly the eternal eating of porridge. And I would make a further and a much higher claim for old diaries and letters. It is to them that I would go to get a vivid understanding of that communal life of the past which I call history. Let me give an example of the way in which from these one may see the real pageant of history, through a few books, recently published, which for the most part would seem to be of ephemeral importance.

In the *Lyme Letters* Lady Newton has been publishing letters from the House of Lyme which allow us to follow the fortunes of the Leghs, the Chicheleys, and their like from the seventeenth into the eighteenth century. Here we are among the country gentlemen and the aristocracy. The House of Lyme did not produce men of brains or distinction; the Leghs and Chicheleys got their places in Parliament and elsewhere because they belonged to the class which got places; but that makes the letters the more interesting, for they show one exactly what the life of the average "upper-class" family was like. In another similar book, *Lord Fife and his Factor*, we are taken again into the same class, for it consists mainly of letters from the second Lord Fife written between 1760 and 1800 to his factor, William Rose. Lord Fife was only a Scottish version of the Leghs and the Chicheleys, an undistinguished, rather unintelligent, commonplace man, a Scottish aristocrat who divided his time between Parliament in London and shooting in Scotland.

In these two books we live the life of the ruling classes, a life which may, in some circles, have had an external glitter, but beneath the surface was distinguished by its intolerably pretentious dreariness. And now compare them with "The Diary of Thomas Turner, of East Hoathly, Sussex (1754–1765)" which carries one into a very different stratum of society in the same eighteenth century. Thomas Turner belonged to the lower classes, being a mercer, grocer, and general dealer in a small Sussex village. The all too brief diary gives one a fascinating glimpse into the life of that village. I do not think that Turner was at all typical of his class and time. He had a passion for reading, and he probably read more books and had more intellectual interest than all the Leghs, Chicheleys, Duffs, and Grants of his time taken together. But every now and then there must have been born in English villages unfortunate men, like him, with intelligence—men to be condemned, like him, by the spirit of the age, the great houses, and the Fifes and Leghs and Chicheleys, to a life of squalor, poverty, and drunkenness. Yet, I think, if one had had to choose, it would have been better to marry Molly Hicks, servant of Luke Spence, Esq., of South Malling, and get drunk with her and Mr. Porter, the clergyman, and Mrs. Porter, the clergyman's wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, than live in Fife House, Mar Lodge, or Lyme among the suburban place-hunters, the titled sportsmen, and their unfortunate wives and daughters.

I happen to have wanted recently to get a clear idea of eighteenth-century life in France in the different classes, and for that purpose I read a number of books from Taine's *L'Ancien Régime* to the correspondence of Maria Theresa, Marie Antoinette, and the Comte de Mercy, and the Memoirs of Madame de Genlis. The difference between French and English life and society during the century is marked, but it is a difference of degree rather than of kind. You cannot read the English or the French diaries and letters without seeing that, both above and below, society was in such a condition that a little breath of fresh air would begin to bring down the cobwebs, and, once the cobwebs were disturbed, a good deal of the building would probably come down with them upon the owners' heads. You do not need to have a particularly fine historical nose to smell dissolution as strongly in the diary of Thomas Turner as in the letters of the Comte de Mercy. Lady Newton ends one of her volumes of *Lyme Letters* with a bitter lament for the passing of " the stately homes of England ", and her last sentence is a tirade against the Labour Government—" a ruthless Government has completed the ruin of the class they set out to destroy ". It seems to be a characteristic of aristocracy (perhaps of humanity) in all ages and countries never to forgive other people for their own faults and mistakes and never to learn by experience. It was not Thomas Turner or Tom Paine or Mr. Ramsay MacDonald who destroyed the " stately homes of England ",

but the Leghs, Chicheleys, and Fifes. When there is a hard winter and starvation in Scotland, Lord Fife writes about the lower-class men and women on his lands:

> I fear our poor People will be in want, should you find any of my People in want I have no objection to giving a little more meal than I allow'd. I fear the poor creatures in Mar are in great want, Allen thinks them Divles, and yet I would not wish them to starve;

but of the partridges he writes:

> Do in this storm, mind to order some oats to the poor Partridges that lodge at Moncoffer, and do send to Smith and desire him to look out where the Coveys are, and to give them some Oats where he sees they frequent, and put the Drum through the town to beat terror to those who go about with Guns to destroy game.

If people like the owners of Lyme and Moncoffer, who do not give a sign of ever having used their great wealth and privileged position for any other purpose than their own sordid interests, continue long enough to beat terror to starving people, it is not surprising that the Drums are sooner or later heard to be beating another kind of Terror.

There are two other diaries of quite undistinguished people which give one a view of another side of the eighteenth century and of its disruption at the hands of the nineteenth century and of modernity. Mary Hamilton, the niece of the Sir William Hamilton who married the notorious Emma, kept a diary (published in *Mary Hamilton*, edited by Elizabeth G. Anson). She was not a

very intelligent lady, but she lived for some time in the society of the Garricks, Horace Walpole, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the Burneys. She tells us what Dr. Johnson said when he came to dinner, and you are at once in a different world from that of the House of Lyme and Lord Fife or from that of the unfortunate grocer of East Hoathly, a world which for many people—and particularly literary people—*is* the eighteenth century. Mary Hamilton had no gifts as a diarist; she merely records her goings and comings, but what a strong whiff of the eighteenth century—than which no period in history is quite so dead to-day—one gets from her diary! For instance, on March 3, 1784, she makes this entry:

> . . . at ½ past 4 went to ye Veseys to dinner, Sir Joshua Reynolds & Miss H. More & Mr Tuttridge din'd there. Mr T. is one of ye King's Gentlemen Usshers, a good humour'd *Coxcomb*; we did not leave ye dining-room till 7. Mr Horace Walpole came as soon as we got into ye Drawing Room. I spent an agreeable Afternoon in hearing ye sensible conversation of Mr H. Walpole & Miss H. More. . . .

"Sensible conversation" with Horace Walpole and Hannah More! Do not the words make one feel one side of the eighteenth century, the age of sensible conversation? And if one reads the other diary[3] to which I referred, you can watch the terrific revolution in the heads of ordinary people which has made the eighteenth century now so dead. Clarissa Trant was personally a very

[3] *The Journal of Clarissa Trant*, 1800–1832, edited by C. G. Luard.

different person from Mary Hamilton, and though her memories begin ten years before Mary's death, the age to which Mary belonged had already perished. Clarissa awoke amid the drums and tramplings which finally destroyed the eighteenth century. She lived a remarkable life and was, I think, a remarkable character. Her father, Sir Nicholas Trant, was a distinguished soldier who raised and commanded Portuguese levies in the Peninsular War. Clarissa was born at Lisbon in 1800, and, as her diary shows, until her marriage in 1831, she was perpetually wandering over Europe with her father. You get a most vivid picture of history in the making and of the eighteenth century in dissolution through the early parts of her diary. For instance, she and her father were in Marseilles on their way back to England when Napoleon landed from Elba, and nothing could be better than her record of the immense journey which they had to make through Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium in order to get home. She met nearly all the distinguished persons of her time, and she was a shrewd and intelligent observer.

And on June 8, 1829, forty-five years after that evening when Mary Hamilton had enjoyed the sensible conversation of Horace Walpole and Hannah More, Clarissa went to see Miss H. More. She found her a very old lady, " her mind much impaired ", dressed in " a company dress, of antique fashion, quiet and grave, but of rich substantial silk ", and talking " of her intimacy

with Edmund Burke and Dr. Johnson ", and relating " anecdotes about Horace Walpole ". Even if Miss More's mind had not been impaired, she would not have understood Clarissa. For during those forty-five years, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars had had their say. The nineteenth century had broken in and laid its hand upon young ladies like Clarissa and many other things. The ruin of the " stately homes of England ", which Lady Newton thinks Mr. Ramsay MacDonald is responsible for, had already begun. The drums which beat terror to starving people were silent at Moncoffer. Even the Leghs and the Chicheleys felt it. The inside of the heads of the Thomas Turners felt it. And in the pages of Clarissa's diary you may still feel it yourself—a curious sense of modernity beginning, of stress and turmoil breaking in upon "ye sensible conversation of Mr. H. Walpole and Miss H. More ".

It is in such diaries and letters and memoirs, it seems to me, that one gets the most vivid and important vision of a pageant of history. It is not the pageant in the old sense, the cavalcade of kings and great men, with the drums and trumpets of marching armies and the pomp of Councils and Congresses and Parliaments. It is not the pageant of the ordinary man going about his ordinary work. It is the pageant of what went on in the heads of ordinary men and women whether they were the Lords of Lyme and Moncoffer or village grocers or middle-class young ladies. And that is the pageant of civilization.

A CIVILIZED MAN

I HAVE always been fascinated by the life and character of Erasmus. He seems to me to have been a really civilized man, a very rare phenomenon in the world's history. Many people appear to believe that the history of spiritual and intellectual civilization shows a steady curve of upward progress. This is a delusion. If you examine the past, at any rate of Europe, you will find that at rare intervals the world showed signs of becoming intellectually and socially civilized. There was such a moment at Athens four hundred years before Christ; another at the beginning of the sixteenth century; another perhaps at the beginning of the twentieth century. The essence of such intellectual and social civilization is reason, tolerance, freedom, democracy, a kind of communal altruism and goodwill; the essence of barbarism is unreason, intolerance, tyranny, superstition, and a mystic belief that there is some virtue in making as many people as possible miserable. Now the curious fact is that whenever in Europe there has been any sign of a large number of people becoming civilized, immediately some appalling catastrophe has been let loose upon the world, the

civilized people have been overwhelmed, and everyone has been plunged back again into the misery of barbarism. In Athens they contrived to blot out civilization by one of the most futile wars that has ever been fought; the nascent civilization of the Renaissance was overwhelmed by the savagery of Catholics and Reformers, an outbreak of religious barbarism which culminated in one of the most horrible events of history, the Thirty Years' War; in 1914 the Great War was only just in time to prevent Europe from becoming civilized.

The ordinary view of Erasmus, put forward by Froude and shared apparently by Professor Huizinga, who has written the latest biographical study of Erasmus, is that he ought to have thrown in his lot with Luther and the Reformers, and that the reason why he did not was that he was weak and cowardly and prepared to compromise with lies. That, I think, is a superficial view both of Erasmus and of the Reformation. Erasmus agreed with Luther up to a point, and was himself a potent cause of the Reformation. He was a fighter all his life against superstition and the sordid corruption of the Church. But the end which he had in view was civilization and a civilized life. He wanted Governments and Churches to be carried on according to reason and common sense, men and women to be able to know the truth and to be allowed to think and to say what they liked. He thought that it was a good thing that people should be happy and should, as much as possible, leave

one another alone, each to be happy in his own way. He considered it important that ordinary people should live in good and comfortable houses, should have nice food to eat, should be clean, and should occasionally open their windows. He had a passion for learning and literature, and he did his best to make it possible for the rest of the world to share his own civilized pleasures. He liked conversation and argument and wit; to sit in a pleasant garden talking to men like More and Colet seemed to him a worthy occupation for a civilized man. He was a Christian who thought that Christians ought to live their lives in accordance with Christ's teachings, and that to persecute and massacre people because they did not hold your view about indulgences or consubstantiation or transubstantiation was neither Christian nor civilized. He hated all violence as the crudest form of unreason and intolerance, and he was one of the first Europeans who refused to believe in the blessings of war.

Such were the general views of Erasmus. No man has ever been more consistent in carrying his beliefs and principles into the practice of his life. He refused absolutely at any time to join any party or faction, precisely because he was determined to keep his intellectual freedom, his freedom from dogma and prejudice. He was always on the right side, the side of reason and civilization, and whenever he saw it changing through violence and superstition and fanaticism to the wrong side, he drew back. He saw with perfect clearness

whither Luther and the Reformers were going, to the persecutions and massacres and Thirty Years' War, and he refused to follow them. He would have nothing to do with the argument by bonfire which was the ultimate argument of the Pope on one side and the Reformers on the other. As early as 1525 he wrote prophetically to Beda that when men begin by burning books they end by burning persons. Of course, Erasmus, with such views, seemed a weak man and a renegade to Luther, who, when the miserable peasants revolted and tried to put his own doctrines into practice, cried:

> Therefore let all who are able hew them down, slaughter and stab them, openly or in secret, and remember that there is nothing more poisonous, noxious, and utterly diabolical than a rebel. You must kill him as you would a mad dog; if you do not fall upon him, he will fall upon you and the whole land;

who said of the Jews:

> I would have their tongues torn out by the roots;

and who said that he heard the voice of the Devil, and it resembled the grunting of a pig. Luther urged his disciples to hate Erasmus as " the worst enemy that Christ has had for a thousand years ". Erasmus never hated Luther, but he hated the idea of killing peasants, tearing people's tongues out by the roots, and burning those who do not agree with you. It seemed to him uncivilized. Personally I incline to agree with him.

INTERNATIONAL MORALITY

SIDGWICK has an almost unique power and method of analysis. He draws distinctions with painstaking pertinacity in such a way as to obliterate finally all outlines. One lays down a book like the *Elements of Politics* with the pleasant feeling that probably there are no such things as ideas, or that, if there are, they almost certainly mean nothing. International law and international morality he assumes to exist, and then very gently he begins to distinguish them from law and morality and from one another, until, with a final full stop, he unintentionally leaves one convinced that international law and morality do not exist. The ordinary man, if he ever opened Sidgwick or could read him when opened, might often conclude that in this he had found a philosophical corroboration of his own belief. We so often tell one another that international law and morality do not exist, and, if the newspapers ever quoted Hobbes, we should be told again and again in those forceful words of the *Leviathan* that in the relations of independent states " right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place ".

Sidgwick himself, it should be noted, says flatly that experience proves Hobbes to have been wrong:

" There *are* accepted rules of international duty, and the pursuit of national self-interest *is* restrained by them ". It would be comforting to be able to agree with him, and it may therefore be of value to make a brief inventory of the facts and of our own beliefs upon the subject, to see what connection with and influence upon the relations of states and foreign policy the ideas of right and wrong have had in the past. And in doing this I propose as far as possible to neglect the well-worn questions of international law, or rather to embrace and lose them in the wider question—what actual effect have ideas of right and wrong had upon the handling of international affairs, and why has the effect been so small? Morality, in the sense in which I am using it, is essentially what the ordinary man means by morality. The ordinary man would say: " It is right to tell the truth even though it harms you ", or " It is wrong to cheat even though it benefits you "; and there can be no question that in the relations of ordinary men with one another these general rules frequently cause them to tell the truth or to keep their hands out of the pockets of their neighbours. It is morality of this kind with which I am concerned, a belief in the rightness or wrongness of certain actions which actually influence persons to do or avoid those actions.

The frequent use of two words " right " and " wrong " points to a broad distinction in morality. It has in fact two sides, one positive, the other negative. In practice there is all the difference in the world between telling the truth and not telling

a lie, between doing something which you don't want to do or which is against your interests because it is right, and not doing something which you want to do or which is in your interests because it is wrong. The morality of Jesus Christ was essentially of the active or positive kind; his doctrine with its " turn to him the other also ", and its " Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you ", led almost logically to the British private morality taught in the nineteenth century, that the goodness of an action varied in an inverse ratio with its pleasantness. Samuel Smiles and Miss Edgeworth's *Moral Tales*, inspired by the Sermon on the Mount, have no use for the child who merely " eschews evil ", and the good man is represented as searching the world with a lantern for good (and unpleasant) things to do.

Is there any positive international morality in this sense? Has the view ever been seriously held or acted upon that a nation should do good for the sake of doing good, should risk the loss, not of the whole, but of even a square yard of the world in order to save its soul? Asked these questions offhand, most people would be inclined to answer with a decided negative, and to maintain that rules of international morality, even when admitted, have been negative, merely imposing limits upon the right to pursue national self-interest. It would be difficult to find in history a case of a nation or statesman acting or professing to act in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount or even of Maria

Edgeworth, and almost as difficult to find a case in which any large body of public opinion urged a statesman so to act. And yet a more curious search into the past does reveal the fact that more modified forms of altruism have influenced foreign policy and have been professed as rules of international action.

The Thucydidean Pericles claimed that Athens was the school of Hellas, because " we alone do good to our neighbours, not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit ".[1] Unfortunately, facts hardly uphold the claim. The words were spoken just when war broke out, a time of emotional stress at which nations are peculiarly liable to believe in the nobility of their own motives. When fifteen years of war had—if one may use the expression—taken the gilt off the national gingerbread, the Athenian ambassador to Melos gave a far more faithful picture of his country's view of international morality:

> You and we should say what we really think, and aim only at what is possible, for we both alike know that into the discussion of human affairs the question of justice only enters where the pressure of necessity is equal, and that the powerful exact what they can, and the weak grant what they must.[2]

We have indeed to go to much more modern times to find a case in which a nation can with some reason claim to have acted from really altru-

[1] Thucydides, ii. 40. [2] Thucydides, v. 89.

istic motives. Perhaps the most curious of all such cases was the first, namely, the action of Britain with regard to the slave trade in 1815. It would of course be absurd to say that no motives of self-interest entered into the anti-slavery agitation. It did, but none the less the international action of Great Britain was most certainly caused by a remarkable popular wave of positive morality. Large numbers of persons thought that the slave trade was morally wrong, and they insisted that their ministers should devote their whole efforts to abolish it at the congress which had really met to reconstruct Europe. "The nation is bent upon the object", Castlereagh wrote in his instructions to Sir H. Wellesley in August 1814. "I believe there is hardly a village that has not met and petitioned upon it; both Houses of Parliament are pledged to press it, and the Ministers must make it the basis of their policy." This case ought to make everyone careful of dogmatizing about national psychology, foreign policy, and international morality. Here was a nation which had just successfully finished an exhausting war of many years' duration, apparently fought on behalf of its own and the world's independence, compelling its ministers at the final settlement not to protect or advance its own interests, taking no notice of the questions of Poland, Germany, Italy, France, but insisting that negroes should not be transported as slaves from Africa to America. To realize fully this curious phenomenon one must remember that it would only be paralleled if, when Mr. Lloyd

George went to the European conference, a wave of popular moral enthusiasm had compelled him to make the basis of his policy not the restoration of Alsace-Loraine, not the restoration of Poland, not the destruction of German militarism or the crushing of Germany, not making Germany pay or hanging the Kaiser, but the abolition of the drink traffic in Africa. And the parallel would only be really complete in its altruism if the country and the ministers had been willing to restore Togoland to Germany as "compensation"[3] for her agreement to abolish the drink traffic.

No nation has ever again reached quite so quixotic a height in its foreign policy as Britain attempted to do in 1815. But in 1876 a somewhat similar instance occurred again in the British nation. The Bulgarian case was similar in that a gust of popular feeling, distinctly moral, had for a time a considerable effect upon the international relations and foreign policy of the country. It differed, however, in one important and interesting particular, namely, that the feeling in the country was directly and deliberately roused by a politician and a statesman, who however, one must add, was out of office. Mr. Gladstone in his famous pamphlet, *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, and in his astonishing campaign and speeches of 1876 and 1877 attempted to persuade the nation to subordinate what it considered its interests to principles of

[3] At one time it was seriously proposed to cede Trinidad to France as compensation for abolishing slavery.

morality, and very nearly succeeded. No more extreme case could be imagined, because it was and remained an axiom of British policy that British interests made it imperative to bolster up Turkey and to keep Russia's hands off her at all costs. And Gladstone, despite his unfortunate habit of ambiguity, did not upon this occasion yield to it: he went the whole moral hog. Looking " like an inspired man ", he told the House of Commons that: " there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honor and justice." For a time Gladstone swept the country off its feet into the paths of peace and righteousness, and though Disraeli had in November 1876 been quite ready for a " righteous " war on behalf of Turkey, by April 1877, when Russia declared war, there was no chance of England doing anything but remain neutral. It must, however, be added that it was not for long that " the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey " were exchanged for a policy of " honor and justice ". It can hardly be said that anything except a mistaken view of British interests guided

British diplomatists in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin.

These are I believe the only two cases in which positive international morality has actually dictated national action. There are of course innumerable cases in which statesmen and nations have claimed, and rightly claimed, to act from moral motives, but in all these cases it will be found that admittedly the dictates of national interests coincided with the dictates of international morality. The peculiarity of the anti-slavery and Bulgarian agitations was that the appeal to self-interest was neglected and a certain course of action demanded solely because it was believed to be right. But though no other particular instances of pure international altruism can be quoted, there is in existence a document in which a British Minister, at the command of his sovereign, attempted to lay down for practical purposes the principles upon which the Cabinet should allow morality to dictate policy. Queen Victoria had been so upset by Palmerston's principles and methods that, when in 1851 she obtained his abrupt disappearance from the Foreign Office, she took the disconcerting course of asking his successor, Lord Granville, to lay down " the general principles for the conduct of our foreign policy ". Lord Granville's memorandum [4] was a most interesting document. He begins with the statement that the duty and

[4] The quotations which follow are taken from the summary of the draft of this memorandum given in Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*.

interest of a country like Britain are "to encourage progress among other nations". But in this task she must use "justice, moderation, and self-respect", and must not seek to encourage progress by "any undue attempt to enforce her own ideas by hostile threats". "One of the first duties of a British Government" is "the encouragement of British foreign trade", but "in aiming at this all considerations of a higher character were not to be pushed aside". "Non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries" was a principle tending "to strengthen the lasting influence of the nation upon the opinion of the world"; as to whether intervention should take place, "no general rule, however, could be uniformly applied". The government should support "the establishment of liberal institutions and the reductions of tariffs" in foreign countries, but they should "press these views only when fitting opportunities occurred".

Comment upon this document is unnecessary. Let us return to the subject of positive international morality. A statesman arguing that policy should be based upon such morality would say in effect: "We ought to do this because it is right, even though it does conflict with our interests". Such an attitude is, as we have seen, extremely rare. The ordinary attitude of statesmen to foreign policy is: "We ought to do this because it is both morally right and materially to our interests". This was habitually the argument of that typically British statesman, Palmerston.

Again and again in his speeches he shows a deep and honest conviction that by a law of nature the dictates of British interests and of morality invariably coincide. He was so convinced of this that sometimes he appeared to be purely a materialist and sometimes purely an idealist. This happened because he sometimes argued to himself: "This is right because it is to British interest", and at other times: "This is to British interest because it is right". That this is the true view of Palmerston can be seen from the light in which his career appears to M. Hanotaux —it is from foreign writers that one always gets the truest conception of our own political history. To M. Hanotaux, Palmerston is a typical idealist, a man moved by a moral passion for liberty.

> Partout où la cause libérale se lève, Palmerston accourt et se déclare son champion. Il chargerait plutôt les moulins à vent. . . . Il chante: "Mort aux tyrans!" En Italie, en Espagne, en Portugal, en France, en Allemagne, sur les continents et sur les mers, il est de toutes les parties révolutionnaires. On dit: "Il soigne ainsi les intérêts anglais". Oui, mais aussi il suit sa pente: il est fils de la Révolution. . . . (Chez lui) l'intérêt national avait lié partie avec l'*Idée*.[5]

It is in fact possible that the Palmerstonian policy really allowed morality to govern international relationships to a greater extent than that of most ministers. The *motive* of his actions was the fostering of liberty rather than of British interests. If he had been good at introspection and truthfully confessed his attitude, he would usually

[5] Gabriel Hanotaux, *La Politique de l'équilibre*, 1907–1911.

have had to express it thus: " I think we ought to do this because it is right, and "—as an afterthought—" because it is also to the country's interest ". In practice this way of looking at things is substantially different from that of most statesmen, whose real process of thought almost invariably appears to be: " I think we ought to do this because it is to the country's interest, and " —as an afterthought—" because it is right ".

There is only one other point about positive morality in international relationships which deserves attention. It is a curious fact that practically every case in which altruistic action has been professed by or recommended to a nation has been a case in which the " liberty " of some human beings was in question. Thus both the anti-slavery and the Bulgarian agitations were questions of liberty; and the whole Palmerstonian policy was directed against tyranny. There is indeed some ground for believing that the positive international moral sense has at present only developed with regard to freedom. There are many people, especially in this country, who would say that it is the duty of a state, regardless of its own interests, to protect the freedom of another state, especially if the inhabitants of the latter are of kindred race to themselves. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to think of any similar international duty which would be recognized by an equally large or even smaller body of people. There was, of course, before the nineteenth century, a large number of people—probably a certain number still

exist—who believed that it was the duty of a state to spread the religion professed by its nationals, even to the extent of exterminating the nationals of other states who refused to profess it. But although this might strictly be regarded as an instance of a once widely recognized international duty, in practice it was always a religious rather than an international duty.

It now remains to consider negative international morality. A statesman arguing that policy should be based on such morality would say in effect: " We ought not to do this, even though it is in our interests, because it is wrong ". Now there is no doubt that many negative international duties of this kind are, in theory and profession, widely recognized and acknowledged. International law, in so far as it is customary international morality crystallized, is largely concerned with them. Its rules lay down the limits within which a nation very ruthlessly pursues its own interests. But international law covers only a very narrow field; and international morality, even of the negative sort, is best studied in the wider field of foreign policy.

The motives governing national actions and policy should themselves be studied in the utterances of statesmen responsible for these actions and policy. Such a study reveals at once a curious paradox. In the first place it is beyond dispute that the actual standard of international morality, as revealed in the actions of one state towards other states, is very low when compared with the

standard of individual morality in civilized or even uncivilized countries. It is so low that the plain man is often tempted to conclude that, in practice, no standard exists at all, and that in the relations of independent states right and wrong really do have no place. And yet the persons primarily responsible for those actions hardly ever admit this, and in their public utterances they almost always assume that the standard of international is very much the same as that of individual morality. Their arguments can usually be reduced to one of the three following forms: (1) We ought to do this because it is to our interest and it is morally right; (2) We ought to do this because it is to our interest and not morally wrong; (3) We ought not to do this because it is morally wrong.

The exceptional cases in which statesmen admit immoral or non-moral policy only serve to emphasize the truth of what I have said above. Bismarck alone among modern statesmen habitually denied the existence of international morality. "Every government", he said, "takes solely its own interest as the standard of its actions, however it may drape them with deductions of justice or sentiment." But it is noticeable that even Bismarck waited until he had retired from active participation in international politics before he allowed the world to know his real opinion upon the subject. Even he, so long as he was chancellor, draped his actions with deductions of right and wrong. But the clearest proof that statesmen feel that they can never afford publicly to deny the

existence of international morality or to override its precepts is to be found in the defence by the Imperial Chancellor of the invasion of Belgium. The argument which that defence implied was really this: " I admit that it is morally wrong to invade Belgium, and a nation is not justified in doing what is morally wrong for its own interests; but it *is* justified when the case is one of necessity, one of life and death ". In other words, the Imperial Chancellor accepted the ordinary standard of individual morality as applicable to international relations, the standard which commonly says, for instance: " It is wrong to tell lies, but, of course, in a matter of life and death one is justified in telling a lie ".

I suggest that there are two reasons why the paradox which I have pointed out exists, and why, although a standard of international morality is always assumed and admitted, it has so very little effect upon international relations. In the first place, the actions of states to one another are hardly ever really influenced by public opinion. This is due partly to the traditional secrecy of Foreign Offices, but also partly to the fact that nearly everyone possesses a profound lack of interest in and sense of responsibility for his country's actions. If anyone thinks this an exaggerated statement, he should read chapters iv. and v. in Mr. Baty's *International Law*. Mr. Baty has collected a large number of cases in which for one reason or another powerful states have " been led to " interfere with their smaller, and often uncivilized, brethren. It

is impossible to read these instances without amazement at the cynical lack of morality in international actions. But it can hardly be an exaggeration to say that not one person in a million, outside the ranks of international lawyers and civil servants, has any knowledge of how his country acted in these cases. How many Englishmen could tell you the process by which the territory of Ja Ja became " incorporated in the British dominions ", or how the German and British Foreign Offices dealt with Samoa? And what is true in these admittedly obscure cases, is hardly less true on the broader and more important stage of foreign policy. For the greater part of his life the ordinary man no more troubles himself with how his country is acting toward Germany than with how it is acting towards Ja Ja.

Standards of morality depend to an enormous extent upon public opinion. Thus it is certain that every man's thoughts are far more immoral than his acts. The reason is that his thoughts are far less influenced than his acts by public opinion. And that brings us to the second cause of our paradox. Since public opinion and the ordinary standards of morality do not habitually influence international actions, the character of those actions will largely depend upon the traditions and standards of that small class actually responsible for them. Now the traditions and moral standards of diplomacy are notoriously low. The publication of a dead diplomatist's severely expurgated memoirs is almost always remarkable for the divulging of some

new and scandalous scandal. Behind the scenes one sees that, to alter slightly Hobbes' sentence, "in the relations of diplomatists right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place". The standards of business morality are not usually considered high, but even a business man of repute would hesitate in important negotiations to tell a deliberate lie to another business man about a vital point, especially if he knew that two days later he would have to admit that it was a deliberate lie. But Baron von Aehrenthal, on October 3, 1908, showed that a similar action by the foreign minister of a great power towards the ambassador of another great power is in diplomatic circles still possible.[6]

It is not, therefore, surprising that in practice international morality so rarely determines foreign policy. What does determine it is diplomatic morality. The result is that the motive of a state's

[6] On October 3, the British Ambassador at Vienna, Sir W. E. Goschen, asked Baron von Aehrenthal officially whether he "had any knowledge of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence". Apparently Aehrenthal had not expected any inquiry about Bulgaria; at any rate, he replied that "he had no knowledge of an impending proclamation of Bulgarian independence, that he did not consider it to be imminent, and added that there was no mention of it in Austro-Hungarian reports from Sofia". Meanwhile, on the same day, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Paris was, two days before his instructions, delivering to the French President the Emperor Francis Joseph's letter announcing the impending annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The President asked the Ambassador the same question as Sir W. E. Goschen was asking Aehrenthal. The Ambassador's reply was "c'est tout arrangé, Monsieur. La Bulgarie nous dévancera d'un jour". The French Government communicated this piece of information to the British Government, thus Sir W. E. Goschen was able to "tax Baron von Aehrenthal with untruthfulness in the presence of several diplomatic witnesses". See *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, by H. W. Steed, from which the above quotations are taken.

action is frequently not even its own interests, but the interests of particular persons. That is, after all, what is meant by the statement that the actions of European powers in the undeveloped quarters of the globe are so often influenced " by financial and commercial interests ". And again the same is true in the wider field of foreign policy. Mr. Brantsford has already drawn attention to the curious case of Count Waldersee. The question of whether Germany should or should not provoke a war with France in 1889 was complicated by the desire of this commander-in-chief, " who was growing old ", to lead his army in the field before his final retirement. " In the end it was found impossible to provide Count Waldersee with a European war, but, to the astonishment of mankind, the Kaiser did, before he reached the age limit, arrange a punitive expedition to China for his benefit."

STATESMEN AND DIPLOMATISTS

It would be difficult to convince the ordinary reader that the history of foreign politics is an intensely interesting and amusing field of study. But that is what it is. It has two advantages over the history of internal politics: its stage is larger, and the events staged upon it less parochial and frequently more dramatic, while the psychology of statesmen and statesmanship can be seen in a peculiar and fascinating light when the actors are Sovereigns and Ministers of hostile and friendly States. Not only is the drama more dramatic and more magnificent; paradoxically, its action is nearer to, and its impact heavier upon, the lives of ordinary people. When on January 10, 1906, Sir Edward Grey, without informing the Liberal Cabinet, agreed to the French Premier's request that " military conversations " should take place between Great Britain and France, he took a step which was going to affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of ordinary people more directly and more violently than any decision of a Liberal Minister between 1905 and 1914 in the field of domestic politics. Or to go still further back, what ripple is left upon the surface of our lives by

anything which the Conservative Governments of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour did in home affairs, but what terrific effect the change in their foreign policy between 1899 and 1904 has had upon the everyday existence of us, the common people!

This was certainly not the ordinary, or even the historical, view of statesmanship and diplomacy before the war. Up to 1914 the whole field of foreign policy was a neglected study in England. Biographies of statesmen were few and not particularly popular. In the more technical study of policy, we had little to show which could compare with what, say, the French had done—there was nothing, for instance, in English as good as Debidour's *Histoire diplomatique* or Lemonon's *L'Europe et la politique britannique*, 1882–1911. The war momentarily created a wider interest in the history of statesmanship, and the result was a sudden outcrop of a large number of books dealing with international relations and the history of foreign policy, but there are very few of these which are worthy of survival; most of them are tendencious and superficial. However, there is some evidence that now our serious historians are giving more disinterested attention to the intensive study of foreign policy. There is, for instance, the *Cambridge History of Foreign Policy*; there are the two companion volumes of Mr. Temperley and Professor Webster, which not only deal with the lives, character, and statesmanship of Castlereagh and Canning, but also form a continuous study of international affairs from 1815 to 1822;

and there is the rather superficial, popular sketch of the lives of three famous statesmen in M. Paleologue's *The Romantic Diplomatist.*

I believe such studies to be useful as well as entertaining. Castlereagh and Canning, Talleyrand, Metternich, and Chateaubriand may seem rather remote from the problems which have in the last years been passing from the hands of Mr. Lloyd George into those of Lord Curzon, and from the hands of Lord Curzon to those of Mr. MacDonald and thence to Sir Austen Chamberlain. But the dead hands of those dead statesmen are, little though he knows it, guiding those of Sir Austen; and it is only by studying what they did and thought that one can obtain any sure basis for knowledge of those great currents which determined policy in the nineteenth century, and are, therefore, the cause of our many troubles to-day.

The light which recent books have thrown on those two opposite, but complementary, figures, Castlereagh and Canning, is peculiarly interesting to the student of foreign policy. Professor Webster's book marked a further stage in the rehabilitation of Castlereagh's reputation as a statesman. The Whig bias, which persisted so long in English history during the nineteenth century, made Castlereagh one of its chief victims and scapegoats. He was represented as a stupid reactionary, tied to the tail of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, a reactionary whose policy followed the interests of every country but his own, and whose

best act was to cut his throat with a penknife. It was only when the Foreign Office records became available for use that the extent of this misrepresentation could be discovered and displayed. Already in 1907 in "The Cambridge Modern History" Mr. Alison Phillips could give a fairly accurate picture of Castlereagh's foreign policy; Professor Webster, with more material at his disposal, has given us all that is required for a final judgement. He, I think, not unnaturally in his desire for a complete rehabilitation of his hero, tends to go a little too far in the direction which is opposite to that of the Whig historians. He reads too much into Castlereagh's policy, and gives him credit for ideas of which there is no real evidence. I am not referring to Castlereagh's policy during the peace negotiations at Vienna or in the negotiations with regard to the occupation and the payment of reparations during the first years of peace. Here one can follow Professor Webster completely in his interpretation of and admiration for Castlereagh's policy. Our ancestors between 1815 and 1822 had to face precisely the same problem which we have had to face between 1918 and 1925. After a long war Europe had beaten a Great Power to its knees; the map had to be redrawn; the economic life of Europe had to be reconstructed; claims for vengeance, indemnities, and reparation had to be met and settled. That all these problems were settled in the course of less than seven years, and on the whole with surprising moderation, justice, and wisdom, was due almost

entirely to two men, Castlereagh and Wellington. They set themselves from the first immovably against a punitive peace, and, as soon as peace was signed, they applied themselves, with great foresight and tenacity, to get the army of occupation out of France and the reparation problem settled. The way in which this was achieved in the negotiations which culminated at the Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle is extremely interesting and illuminating. The difference between 1817 and 1920 could not be more clearly shown than by the fact that the Allies' impossible claims to reparations were remitted, with the approval of both conquerors and conquered, to the arbitration of the victorious Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies, and that Wellington agreed to a settlement which gave the Allies far less than they were entitled to, because, as he said, " the sacrifice was necessary and we should have got nothing if we had not made it ". I wonder what Marshal Foch would have said under similar circumstances.

But where Professor Webster deals with the policy of Castlereagh in the wider field of European and world politics he is inclined to exaggerate his hero's foresight and wisdom. He credits him with a " great conception ", which he calls " Diplomacy by Conference ". He implies that Castlereagh was in advance of his age and had an idea of keeping the Alliance together and transforming it into a Concert of Europe through a series of Conferences, of which Aix-la-Chapelle was the first. I can see no evidence of this.

Historians are apt to credit statesmen in the realm of foreign policy with a foresight and consistency which very few of them possess. Statesmen are like chess players. Most of them, if they are above the average, have a few quite clear and near objectives. They are aiming at taking a particular piece or beating off a particular attack or getting out of a particular difficulty. They only see a very few moves ahead in the game. Castlereagh was essentially this kind of player and statesman. He wanted peace, and so he wanted to get the army out of France; he wanted the Aix-la-Chapelle Conference because it was a useful move in that direction; but a year or two later he did not want the Alliance to interfere in Italy, and so he did not want the Conference of Troppau because that was a useful move for Russia and Metternich, who were in favour of Allied intervention. Castlereagh was, in fact, a player who had a clear idea of tactics, but did not understand the wider field of principles and strategy. Talleyrand and Bismarck were the only modern statesmen who certainly did take this wide and long view in their manipulation of States and nations; they were strategists as well as tacticians. Even Metternich, who at first sight may seem to have had a clear, consistent, and far-sighted policy, was little more than a tactician. His end was counter-revolution, and he made a move here and a move there whenever and wherever he thought that it would counter a revolutionary. But he had no broad conception of any European system or grouping towards which he could work consist-

ently, and his policy was a series of improvizations to meet events as they came rather than the materialization of a conscious plan to control events. If this be true of Metternich, it is still more true of so typical a British statesman as Castlereagh.

When one turns from Castlereagh to Canning, one comes to a much more attractive character. One can admit that Castlereagh was unjustly treated by his contemporaries and by the Whig historians of last century; but, though he was a statesman of considerable ability and character, he was not a personality for whom one can feel much enthusiasm. There was something inhumanly cold about him which accounts for the hatred which he inspired during his life and for the way in which he was misunderstood after his death. Canning was the exact antithesis of Castlereagh. He was one of the most human and warm-blooded of statesmen—a race of men whose blood, I suspect, usually runs rather coldly in their veins. I could forgive much to the Foreign Secretary who could write the famous rhyming dispatch to Bagot in 1826, a time when no one had yet dared to break through the puerile pomposities of diplomacy. (It is to be noted that some writers, as Mr. Temperley says, have considered that Canning's joke was " an instance of his incurable and incorrigible levity ".) Canning is always too conscious of and amused by the ridiculous in human affairs, including those of Courts and Cabinets and Chanceries, to be able to talk the

pompous nonsense which is the stock-in-trade of most statesmen and politicians. Even his official dispatches are illuminated by irony, and his semi-official documents and private letters are full of amusing comments. For instance, he writes that he is sending to the St. Petersburg Embassy a new secretary, Michael Ward, " my predecessor's (Castlereagh's) brother-in-law; consequently acceptable to the Holy Alliance: and he is further peculiarly qualified for the cold and the glare of a snowy clime, by wearing a large brown wig and spectacles, probably green. He will have nothing to do . . . but to wear them in the manner most agreeable to the Emperor."

Canning had wit, humour, and a certain strong vein of irony, but he was not temperamentally a cynic. He was warm-blooded and extremely sensitive. He often burst into tears in public, though it is a curious fact that in the early part of the nineteenth century this was quite a common habit of politicians, and " a burst of tears " was not an unusual incident even in the House of Lords. Canning, in character, outlook, and methods, was the first modern politician. The men who were left in power at the end of the Napoleonic wars all belonged to the eighteenth century. Politically a Tory and with no sympathy for democracy, Canning was yet the first statesman to feel in his bones those new currents of thought and aspiration which had been let loose in Europe by the French Revolution. It was not alone that he set himself, deliberately and successfully, to break the Holy

Alliance, that typical conspiracy of " black internationalism " which is always ruthlessly practised when kings and Conservatives get the chance. But in his methods with regard to the Press and public opinion, he was the first modern. He was the first statesman to go outside the House of Commons and speak to " the people ", to publish important diplomatic documents during the progress of negotiations, and to tell the monarchs and statesmen of foreign countries that he would not and could not pursue a line of policy which was contrary to the will of the English people.

Naturally to the aristocrats and relics of a moribund age and society who were in office and power all round him, Canning was an outrage. To the leaders of his own party he was a plebeian, and Lord Grey opposed him on the ground that " he regarded the son of an actress as being *de facto* incapacitated from being Premier of England ". As Foreign Secretary he had practically all his colleagues, except the Prime Minister, consistently against him and his policy, and neither they nor his subordinates in the Diplomatic Service hesitated treacherously to intrigue with Russian and Austrian statesmen in order " to get rid of him ", or to checkmate his policy. Wellington hated him, and the one blot on the Duke's career is his behaviour towards Canning. As for Metternich and the other foreign Holy Alliance statesmen, they were perpetually being driven into frenzies by Canning's methods. Nevertheless, or rather because of this, no Foreign Secretary in the nine-

teenth century was more popular or powerful than Canning, and none was more successful in imposing his policy upon treacherous colleagues, a hostile sovereign, and foreign opponents. His success was due partly to the rare combination of an unusually quick and subtle mind with a fiery spirit and unfaltering will, and partly to the fact that he deliberately placed behind his policy the full weight of public opinion in England. The story is one of the strangest and most dramatic in the whole history of politics—this son of an actress indomitably pursuing his policy in the teeth of his treacherous, aristocratic colleagues, against the king, and Alexander, and Metternich, and usually the French; winning over the king, beating Wellington, winning over Alexander, driving Metternich to despair; and finally in that little scene which the French *chargé d'affaires* draws for us when he went to see Canning in the midst of a dangerous crisis and found him walking on the lawn at Gloucester Lodge reading Vergil and quoting:

> Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
> Pulueris exigui iactu compressa quiescent.

It is a significant fact that Castlereagh and Canning were contemporaries of the three statesmen, Talleyrand, Metternich, and Chateaubriand, whom M. Paléologue, himself a distinguished French diplomatist, has written of as "romantic diplomats". The idea that the age of Napoleon was also an age of romantic diplomacy is, of course, absurd. There

was a touch of romance in Canning, and Chateaubriand may have been romantic in everything, but Castlereagh was romantic in nothing, and Talleyrand and Metternich in nothing but their eternal love affairs — and even there it is difficult to believe that there can, in fact, have been much romance in a love affair with the Princess Lieven. The years 1790 to 1830 were not an age of romantic diplomats, but they were an age of great classical diplomacy. No period of European history can show such a galaxy of famous statesmen as Talleyrand, Metternich, Castlereagh, Canning, Stein, and Hardenberg. Nor were these men merely famous names; the first four, at any rate, were statesmen or diplomatists of the highest class.

It is true that Metternich is one of the great historical characters in whom I can never see much interest. He was not a romantic diplomatist, but the very essence of diplomacy. A man of great intelligence, finesse, courage, pertinacity, he seems never to have regarded life, persons, nations as anything but parts of a diplomatic manœuvre. His immense skill in the game was shown by the large part he played in bringing down Napoleon. From 1806 to 1814 the part which he played was a very dangerous one, and one cannot but admire the quickness of wit, the practical inventiveness, and the unyielding nerve which he brought to it. But one admires Metternich as one would a clever juggler or a great chess player. His horizon was the green baize of the diplomatic table, and he had no sense of history. It is doubtful whether he ever

understood the importance of any event of his time or realized that something had died out of Europe in 1789. It is even probable that the crash of 1848 never enlightened him, and that he died at the age of eighty-seven believing that everything can be accomplished by pulling wires.

That was a mistake which, I think, Talleyrand never made. In pure diplomacy he was as good as, I should say better than, Metternich. He was equally quick and inventive in manœuvre, and he saw further and deeper. His subtlety and astonishing nerve are shown by the fact that he played the leading part in diplomacy from the Directory to the Restoration, representing France not only under the Directory, the Consulate, and the Empire, but at the Congress of Vienna. But he was never merely the diplomatist. He was a statesman who could see history as well as foreign politics. That was why even before 1800 he could foresee that the Napoleonic system must destroy itself, and why in 1814 he could meet Castlereagh and Metternich as equals at the Congress. But behind his statesmanship there lay something more interesting, the most complete cynicism of which a human being is capable. I always think that Talleyrand was far more of a superman than Napoleon. He was always master of his fate. That was what enabled him to live, dignified and contemptuous, through the terrible days when he was betraying Napoleon and the humiliating years which followed Waterloo. It gave him also his superb effrontery. For effrontery nothing has ever equalled his remark at one

of the earliest meetings of the plenipotentiaries at Vienna. Someone mentioned "the King of Naples", meaning Murat, and Talleyrand, the ex-Minister of Napoleon, who was Murat's brother-in-law and had made him king, said: "What King of Naples is under discussion? We do not know the man in question."

The men of the Napoleonic era whom I have mentioned were not only great figures, but, compared with those of a later age, really great statesmen. Think of the Congress of Berlin in 1878 or Versailles in 1919. At the first only the names of Bismarck and Disraeli are remembered. Bismarck can take his stand beside the greatest. He, too, was always master of his fate; he knew the past, kept his hand steady upon the present, and foresaw something of the future. I have the profoundest dislike of his principles and policy, but one must admit the extraordinary intelligence of their conception and the genius of their execution. Like Talleyrand and Metternich, Castlereagh and Canning, Bismarck was not controlled by but controlled events. But he was the only statesman at the green baize table of 1878 who could have sat on an equality with the four or six who were alive in 1815. Disraeli may have been a man of genius, but he was too erratic and inconsistent to be a great statesman. At one moment the equal of Bismarck, at the next he was a fantastic visionary; and the explanation of his eccentricities is that the main motive behind his political and diplomatic activities was not passion, principle, prejudice,

party, patriotism, or even place, as it is with most politicians and statesmen, but a state of mind which is popularly supposed to belong to artists rather than to practical men. He liked to treat life and politics as a stage, upon which he could arrange his exciting or gorgeous little dramas, play the leading part, manipulate the other puppets. He was nearer to Charlie Chaplin or Douglas Fairbanks than to Bismarck or Talleyrand.

And the men of 1919? M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson? The unfortunate Count Brockdorff-Rantzau? Can we really say that one of them was fit to sit at the same table with Talleyrand, Metternich, and Castlereagh? They have the appearance of being not the masters, but the puppets, of events. Only M. Clemenceau, among the statesmen of the war, seems to have had a clear conception of where he wished to go and how to get there. But what a narrow, unintelligent vision his was, compared even with that of a Metternich!

M. Paléologue thinks that with Napoleon and the Napoleonic statesmen romance died out of diplomacy. This is nonsense. But it is true that the statesmen of the first part of the nineteenth century belonged to a school of diplomacy which is now dead. The turmoil and chaos in Europe was just as great during the Napoleonic wars as during the war of 1914–1918. If you watch the figures of Talleyrand and Metternich during those terrible years, you will see them often running before the gale, but always steadily guiding their

ships towards a perfectly clear goal. They acted instinctively as if they could control both men and events, and so to some extent they were able to control them. Compared with them, the statesmen of the Great War cut helpless figures. They seem to be men completely at the mercy of circumstances, in the grip of forces which they do not understand and which they do not even pretend to control; lawyers, rhetoricians, and schoolmasters whom a savage and ironical god has set as captains of rudderless ships in a great storm. It is impossible to overlook this change in the quality and calibre of statesmanship which has taken place between Talleyrand and President Wilson. The change is, of course, only part of that greater change from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, from the age of monarchs to the age of democracy and capitalism. If you read any book on modern diplomacy, and particularly any book on what the Americans call dollar diplomacy, you will see that the springs of national action are to-day quite different from what they were in the days of Talleyrand. Mr. Harriman, the railway magnate, who determined to girdle the world with an American railway, is a powerful figure who stands behind the American diplomatist, and there are other figures like Mr. J. P. Morgan, Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, and Mr. Otto Kahn. There is no place for a Talleyrand, a Metternich, or a Bismarck—for Bismarck was the last statesman of the old school—when Mr. Harriman holds the strings, for the real diplomatists in dollar diplomacy are the railway magnates and

financiers, not the foreign ministers and ambassadors. M. Paléologue sums up the difference in the words of Chateaubriand that Napoleon was the last of the great individual lives. That is only superficially true. The great individual lives are still lived, not by the Talleyrands and Napoleons, but by the Harrimans and the Northcliffes.

Many people deplore the fact that foreign policy is passing from the hands of statesmen and diplomatists into those of financiers. I sometimes think that the record of statesmanship during the last hundred years or so is such that it may be a good thing to let finance try its hand. For when I read history, and particularly the history of foreign affairs and international relations and the great wars which have done so much for the glory and happiness of civilized nations, I often have a curious mental experience. As I said above, I do not share the common opinion that books about international relations are dull. The detailed story of diplomacy and foreign policy in the nineteenth century is to me fascinating. The subterranean struggles and manœuvres, in which everyone has everything to lose and nothing to gain, combine the tragic grandeur of an Æschylean tragedy with the subtle mystery of the best modern detective novel. The ridiculous Kaiser strutting to his doom in Potsdam reminds one of the figures whom the Greeks loved to set up for the gods to laugh at, and M. Hartwig, plotting in the Balkans, would make the fortune of a detective-story writer. The game which these creatures play is as intricate and as interesting as

chess, and to study the network of treaties and to try to unravel it is far more enthralling than a good acrostic or crossword puzzle. So when I read the inner history of the Congress of Berlin or of the Moroccan crisis or the colossal involved epic of the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, I soon get carried away; I follow with what journalists call "breathless interest" the tale of great events, the ebb and flow of nations, the perilous feat of maintaining a "balance of power", and the superhuman efforts of those supermen, called statesmen, the outcome of which may mean the difference between Empire and national annihilation. And then suddenly I suffer a strange intellectual revulsion. Suddenly the vision vanishes and the whole thing seems to me idiotic, the hallucinations of madmen, the incoherence of a bad dream.

Make the following experiment. Take M. Poincaré's *Memoirs*, Mr. Lowes Dickinson's *The International Anarchy*, 1904–1914, or any other book which gives a fairly detailed account of the international events and diplomacy which led to the war. If you read it carefully, but stop halfway or three-quarters way through it and consider for a moment what all this is about, what the actual things and realities are for which these great statesmen were struggling and plotting and staking the lives of millions and the existence of nations—if you consider this question as calmly and coldly as you would the question of a man who asks you the nearest way from Charing Cross to Waterloo, you can give but one answer: "Nothing more sub-

stantial than the delusions of a bad dream ". I am convinced that the whole of the foreign policy of Europe from 1878 to 1914 was based upon complete delusions which no rational man—if he allowed his reason to function—would accept for one moment. That is the reason why every statesman (except Bismarck) was wrong in his judgement of the effect of nearly every event of first-class importance, why they were always everywhere backing the wrong horses, why the whole of history is a grim mockery of their plans, intentions, and promises. It is almost inconceivable that people can look round the world to-day and compare the results with the promises of the statesmen of the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente—those promises of what would happen if we entered the Entente and fought the war to end war and to establish democracy, or if the Germans stood in shining armour by the side of Austria or fought the war to break the " policy of encirclement "—it is almost inconceivable that people can see this and still believe that these hallucinations are realities. Personally I do not believe that there was a single statesman's object of any war fought in the last hundred years which was worth the bones, not of a Pomeranian Grenadier, but of a stray cat. And if I am asked for a reason, I answer: " Compare the condition of Europe and of the ' object ' after the war and before it ". But then I take precisely the opposite view of reality from Isvolsky (and other European statesmen) who said of the proposal for disarmament: " It is a dream of Jews,

Socialists, and hysterical women". The balance of power, prestige, national honour, national "friendships" or "enmities", economic advantages, imperialism—examine them as they appeared first in the minds of the Isvolskys and then in the actual world of men and women, and you will see that they are complete and often meaningless delusions, catchwords of irrational passion, the grotesque ingredients of that nightmare which we call international history.

THE TWO KINGS OF JERUSALEM

The plain twentieth-century man, who travels daily on the Tube and performs the common round of life, and who, therefore, is not conversant with the ways of diplomacy and Foreign Offices and politics, might learn many things to surprise him in two thick volumes on *Diplomatic Practice*, produced by Sir Ernest Satow at the very moment when, in Russia, one of the last strongholds of the eighteenth century was crumbling under the hammer-strokes of the twentieth. For instance, what plain man knows that, in the eighteenth century and in diplomacy right up to 1918, there were two Kings of Jerusalem? Yet so it was; and the fact was of some importance to diplomatists. For kings have three kinds of titles: the *grand titre*, the *titre moyen*, and the *petit titre*; and the *grand titre* is used in the most solemn of diplomatic documents. Now, when the Emperor of Austria signed his *grand titre*, he claimed to be not only Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary, Count of Hohenembs, and fifty other things, but also King of Jerusalem; and when the King of Spain signs his *grand titre* he claims to be not only King of Spain and Gibraltar, but also King of

Jerusalem and Emperor of Austria. Therefore, if very important diplomatic documents had to be signed *en grand titre* by Austria and Spain, they were signed not by the Emperor of Austria and the King of Spain, but by two Kings of Jerusalem and two Emperors of Austria. This is obviously awkward, especially if, as sometimes happens, the diplomatists begin seriously to discuss who *is* King of Jerusalem. A way out of the difficulty has been discovered which is characteristic of the diplomatic mind. When such titles are used, an article is inserted in the treaty stipulating that "*cela ne tire pas à conséquence*".

We have said that this is characteristic of the diplomatic mind, and the two volumes of Sir Ernest Satow prove our assertion. They are excellent and fascinating volumes, but the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not the twentieth, rustle in their pages. Diplomatic practice everywhere retains much of the spirit and the letter of the *ancien régime*, and when occasionally brutal modern facts compel the diplomatist regretfully to acknowledge that Louis XVI. is dead, he still retains even the ancient letter, and adds with a sigh: "*Cela ne tire pas à conséquence*". Thus there are 800 pages in Sir Ernest's volumes, but not until the last page of the last volume, and then only vaguely, is there any recognition of the fact that diplomacy can be used as the art of obtaining co-operation between nations and peoples. The book is intended as a guide for the young diplomatist, and the young diplomatist will learn that the

chief qualification for his post is, according to Sir Ernest, that he must be, " in short, a *gentleman* ", with " good temper, good health, and good looks". " Science is not necessary ", and " geography, beyond elementary notions, is not of great value ". And the reason soon becomes obvious. Diplomacy, for Sir Ernest, is still pre-eminently a thing of Courts and Princes, of etiquette, manners, forms, and titles. The Spanish Ambassador, for instance, regards himself not as a servant of the Spanish people, but as a personal representative of the King of Jerusalem. And that is what makes his birth and his manners so supremely important; for in a society where a man moves as a personal representative of Counts of Hohenembs and Kings of Jerusalem it is supremely important that he should be, " in short, a gentleman ".

Diplomacy and diplomatists are the everyday organs of international relationship, and because they are hide-bound by traditions which began to die violent deaths nearly a century and a half ago, international relations suffer. They suffer in two ways particularly, and it is only by tracing the history of diplomacy and the persistence of its traditions that we can reveal its feelings. In the first place, the diplomatist was in all countries, and still is in many countries, the representative not of a people or Parliament, but of a Court and a King. Now, etiquette and titles and forms, which to ordinary people are trifles, are of intense importance to Courts and Kings. One can see this in *The Life and Letters of Queen Victoria*, or in the

Kaiser's genuine horror of *lèse-majesté*. Hence the perpetual and, to the ordinary man, ridiculous preoccupation of diplomacy with the minutiæ of form. Only a few years before the cataclysm of the Revolution the Court and diplomacy of Louis XVI. nearly embroiled the French and Russian nations by refusing to address the Czarina as *impériale* or *votre majesté très-chrétienne*. Under such circumstances the precedence of their royal masters was for ambassadors always a question of " vital interest and honour ". This explains the enormous importance to diplomatists of the order in which people sit round a table or walk, a fact which gave rise to an interesting episode at a Court ball in London in 1763. The order of precedence gave the right of the first seat to the ambassador of the Emperor, but the French claim to the second seat was not universally admitted. On this occasion the Russian Ambassador arrived before the French and proceeded to take his seat next to the Imperial Ambassador. When the French Ambassador arrived he was infuriated to see what had happened, but with the dexterity of a diplomat, and aided, we presume, by physical slimness, he promptly climbed over the second bench and contrived to slip himself in between the persons of his two colleagues. The result was a serious diplomatic " incident " and a duel. This tremendous question of kingly and imperial precedence accounts, of course, for the otherwise inexplicable behaviour of diplomatists at International Peace Congresses before the nineteenth century. One may recall as typical

Macaulay's description of the Congress of Ryswick, at which " the chief business " of the French and Imperial plenipotentiaries " was to watch each other's legs. Neither of them thought it consistent with the dignity of the Crown which he served to advance towards the other faster than the other advanced towards him. If, therefore, one of them perceived that he had inadvertently stepped forward too quick he went back to the door, and the stately minuet began again." At Ryswick the plenipotentiaries spent a month or two disputing over such questions of precedence, *e.g.* as to who should, and who should not, be addressed as " Excellency ", but that was nothing to the record of some congresses. At the Congress of Cambray the plenipotentiaries, when they met in 1721, decided that the first thing to do was " to frame a *règlement* for ceremonial, police, and conduct of servants of the plenipotentiaries "; but it took four years to arrive at agreement upon the *règlement*, which was only approved on April 7, 1725, " just as the Congress was on the point of being broken up ".

The world has, of course, moved on since Cambray, and diplomacy, to some extent, with it. But the tradition that the main content of diplomacy is precedence, honour, forms, manners, and etiquette is far from dead. Almost the whole of Sir Ernest's book is concerned either with precedence, etiquette, or forms, from the elaborate ceremonial when the Czar of All the Russias receives—or, rather, received—an ambassador down to the number of

guns to which an Envoy Extraordinary is entitled when he visits a warship, or the exact wording of the last diplomatic flourish in a Protocol. The extraordinary persistence of the tradition is perhaps most obvious in that most important question of the language of diplomatic intercourse. All through the eighteenth century diplomatists quarrelled about the right of the one to address the other in his own language, and the question was so burning because it was bound up with that of the precedence of the different monarchs and states. Thus, about 1750, important negotiations between France and England had to be suspended owing to the refusal of the French Commissioners to receive a memorandum in English. But one hundred years later the same question was still troubling diplomatists, and Russia, Germany, and England all kept the old quarrels going at one time or another in the persons of Canning, Bernstorff, Lord Aberdeen, Palmerston, Budberg, Bismarck, and Gortschakov. Probably the dovecots of the European Chancelleries are still periodically fluttered by one diplomatist attempting to force another to write notes to him in a language which either one or both of them do not understand.

But diplomatic practice suffers from another and a still more disastrous characteristic which is also derived directly from its ancient monarchical traditions. The old view of the diplomatist's function is shown in the famous definition of an ambassador by Sir Henry Wotton as " an honest man, sent to lie abroad for the good of his country ", or in the

terser definition by Callières as "an honourable spy". Callières, writing two hundred years ago, adds that one of the principal occupations of a diplomatist is to discover the secrets of the Court to which he is accredited. There you have the tradition baldly revealed in its original nakedness. The ambassador is the personal representative of his king, and all other kings are his enemies, open or secret, plotting and intriguing to get the better of him. Diplomacy, so far from being the art of international co-operation, is the art of a masked and latent war, to be carried on by intrigue, bribery, a nimble brain, and the skilful use of ambiguous language. It is no exaggeration to say that this tradition survives to-day in a modified form. I have already remarked that there is hardly a hint in Sir Ernest's two volumes that diplomacy might, and should, be used as the art of international co-operation. To him the diplomatist is still a man who is perpetually engaged in a struggle against a competitor and a foe. The maxims of Callières are reproduced by him "as hints that may be valuable to younger members of the profession", because they "have lost nothing of their value by the lapse of time". The subtle and pernicious effect of this tradition upon international relations could only be shown by a detailed analysis of diplomatic negotiations, but one apparently unimportant example may serve to indicate the trend of its effect. Sir Ernest devotes considerable space in his book to an attempt to define the most important words used in diplomacy. The results are not

exhilarating. Some words, such as "*démarche*", defy definition simply because they appear to be capable of being used to mean anything under the sun. In other cases an elaborate attempt is made to distinguish between two technical terms such as Mediation and Good Offices; but, having made the distinction, diplomatists in their communications punctiliously and almost invariably confuse the two meanings. Now, as soon as actual negotiations are analysed, the object and effect of this careful misuse of language become apparent. It facilitates the deception of the other man, who is regarded as an opponent *ex hypothesi*, and it enables one to tell in a gentlemanly manner what in other circles would be simply a lie. Here are two examples. At the time of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Granville offered "Good Offices" or "Mediation" (the two terms were confused) to the French Government with a view to settling the differences. The Duc de Grammont replied that "*nous ne saurions accéder aujourd'hui à l'offre du Cabinet de Londres*". At the same time he made a speech to the Chamber saying that he had begun negotiations with foreign powers: "*Afin d'obtenir leurs bons offices auprès de la Prusse afin qu'elle reconnût la légitimité de nos griefs*". Sir Ernest Satow has an explanation of these discrepant statements which I do not understand; the obvious explanation is that diplomatic language enables a minister to refuse mediation and at the same time to inform Parliament that he is asking for it. The second example is more recent and even more remarkable,

though it is not quoted by Sir Ernest. An *ultimatum* is defined in his book as a " Note or memorandum in which a Government or its diplomatic representative states the conditions on which the State in whose name the declaration is made will insist ". The refusal of an *ultimatum*, therefore, entails war; and Sir Ernest regards the Austrian Note to Serbia of July 1914 as an *ultimatum*. So, too, did Sir Edward Grey at the time when he was deprecating such a violent and irrevocable measure on the part of the Austrian Government. Thereupon (*vide* No. 14 in the White Paper) the Austrian Ambassador was " authorized to explain " to him " that the step taken at Belgrade was not an ultimatum, but a *démarche* with a time limit ". It would be difficult to find a more beautiful example of the diplomatic lie.

"PLEASE, SIR, IT WAS THE OTHER FELLOW"

"PLEASE, Sir, it was the other fellow." The grand chorus of pre-war statesmen continually grows, but the refrain is ever the same, sublimely simple: "Please, Sir, it was the other fellow". The latest to join the chorus have been the ex-Crown Prince of Germany and M. Poincaré; before them it was Lord Grey of Fallodon, before him the Kaiser, and before him Bethmann-Hollweg, Russian Generals, M. Caillaux, Mr. Churchill, Signor Giolitti, Lord Haldane, Isvolsky, Herr Jagow, Admiral Tirpitz, Count Czernin. All these monarchs and ministers, who immediately before the war were responsible for the conduct of international relations, have published elaborate explanations and apologies to show that they were in no way responsible for the Great War, and to show at the same time that some one on the other side of the frontier was responsible for it. Surely this is a remarkable phenomenon, well worthy of study by the student of foreign politics—if not of the man who in peace is in the street, but in war is in the trenches—that if you invert the statements of the Kaiser and the Crown Prince and Bethmann-Hollweg,

you get the statements of M. Poincaré, Isvolsky, and Lord Grey. Unfortunately the man in the street or the trenches is not a student of diplomacy and foreign affairs; if he were, he might learn some salutary lessons from an examination of, say, the explanations of the three latest apologists, Lord Grey, M. Poincaré, and the ex-Crown Prince.

Lord Grey's *apologia pro actis suis*,[1] if not the most important, is perhaps the most interesting of these apologies. It contains no revelations and gives us no knowledge of events which we did not possess before; but psychologically it stands by itself. It is written with a simplicity and apparent ingenuousness which must exert great charm over most people. There are passages in it about birds, fishing, and nature, about the tedium of office and London and the pleasures of an otiose country life, which will appeal to all but the most cynical. It gives an extraordinarily calm and clear exposition of Viscount Grey's reasons or motives for following the policy which he did follow in the years and weeks and days before the war. The characters of nearly all the protagonists in the catastrophe—and not only their characters but the motive or reason for their particular acts —are perfectly clear; after (or even before) the publication of the many apologies, one can understand the policy and acts of Tirpitz or even the Kaiser, of Isvolsky and Sazonov, of Berchtold, or of Poincaré. But I have never been able to

[1] *Twenty-Five Years*, 1892–1916.

understand Sir Edward Grey's policy before the war, nor do I now understand it after reading Viscount Grey's two volumes of explanation. I believe, of course, that he strove with all his might to prevent war, but what I cannot understand is how any man with the intelligence of a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs could take the view of the European situation and policy which he took and still takes.

To Lord Grey, of course, the other fellow is always the German. It was the Kaiser, or the people who controlled the Kaiser and German policy, who were responsible for the war, and not only Britain, but her allies, France and Russia, were guiltless. Again and again Viscount Grey insists on two points: (1) that the policy of the Entente, as pursued by him, was not used against German interests; (2) that nothing which he did compromised the freedom of this country to choose in 1914 whether it would or would not support France *and Russia*. I have never been able to understand how either of these contentions is maintainable. Take the first point. Viscount Grey remarks about the Agreement with France, which founded the Entente, "it was all made public, except a clause or two of no importance". This remark simply takes one's breath away. The published clauses of the Treaty of April 8, 1904, were of little or no importance; they simply stated that Great Britain and France had no intention of altering the political status either of Egypt or Morocco. It was precisely the secret clauses

which were important, because they provided for what the two Powers would do when—contrary to their declared intention—they proceeded to alter the political status of Egypt and Morocco. The Moroccan crises between France and Germany arose not over the published clauses, but when France began to put into execution the secret clause by taking the first steps towards altering the political status of Morocco. Now the Treaty itself, precisely through the secret clauses, gave us a *quid pro quo* for agreeing to France having a free hand in Morocco, and if that had remained the basis of the Entente, Sir Edward Grey's policy would have been understandable and Germany would have had no ground of complaint. But the Treaty and the Entente did not stop there; it promised France diplomatic support—actually interpreted by Sir Edward Grey and the Government as armed support in every crisis which arose —in her claim to a free hand in Morocco. Thus Sir Edward was forced by his interpretation of the Entente to oppose Germany when she asked for a similar *quid pro quo* for *her* allowing France a free hand in Morocco. Germany had just as much (or as little) right to such a *quid pro quo* as we had. How, then, can it be said that the policy of the Entente was not used against the policy and interests of Germany?

I do not defend the policy of the German Government before the war; in my opinion it was indefensible. My quandary is that I cannot understand Viscount Grey's defence of British

policy. By making the basis of the Entente an obligation to support French policy and interests (and therefore, as the sequel showed, Russian policy and interests), both within and without Europe, he was entering the " European system " of hostile alliances definitely on one side, and pledging himself to support the policy and interests of one group against those of the other. That may have been the right policy for a British statesman to adopt in the years 1906–1914, though I personally think it was wrong. But, I repeat, I cannot understand the mind of a statesman who takes this step, and then maintains that " the Entente with France was not to be used against German policy and interests ". Even in Viscount Grey's defence of his own policy it is clear that any sign of amicableness from this country to Germany—even a visit by the King to Berlin—was interpreted in Paris and St. Petersburg as a " weakening " of the Entente, and the basis of the Entente, as interpreted by Sir Edward Grey and French and Russian statesmen, in fact made any agreement with Germany impossible.

" The lack of wisdom, foresight, or resource of those who have to take a hand in great affairs must be judged in the light of after events," says Viscount Grey. As the last days of July 1914 dragged themselves out, it is clear that Sir Edward Grey suffered agonies. He was like a man who has put his head into a noose, leaving the ends of the rope in the hands of other people, and who feels it gradually tighten. I can understand,

though I do not agree with, the argument that we were wise to put our heads in the noose. What I cannot understand is the repeated statement of Viscount Grey that our heads were never in the noose at all. "Neither the Franco-British military nor the Anglo-Russian naval conversations compromised the freedom of the country," he says. And yet it was because of those conversations that the French, with the approval of the British and relying upon the British Fleet in time of war, removed the French fleet to the Mediterranean. And, again, it was because of those agreements and undertakings that on August 2, 1914, twenty-four hours before Sir Edward Grey had made his speech in the House of Commons, he gave the French Ambassador the following statement:

> I am authorized to give an assurance that if the German Fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coasts or shipping, the British Fleet will give all the protection in its power.

I cannot understand—I must repeat it again—the mind of a statesman who gives such an assurance and still maintains that "neither the Franco-British military nor the Anglo-Russian naval conversations compromised the freedom of the country". And so Viscount Grey's apology leaves me in the quandary in which I was before I read it. The immediate causes of the war are now pretty clear; the motives and policy of all the protagonists, except one, are not obscure; Viscount Grey remains for me a psychological mystery.

There is no psychological mystery about M. Poincaré.[2] A hard, dry, narrow, precise, little mind, worked by an obstinate will, leaves no room for the sentimentalities and more human weaknesses which produce psychological problems. No doubt academically a lover of peace, he was pre-eminently one of those statesmen who think of peace in terms of war. His motives are as clear as his policy is logical. Believing that war was practically inevitable, and *ex hypothesi* that it would all be the fault of the other fellow, the wicked German, he had but one object—that when the day came the big battalions should be on the side of his country. Any and every means were justified by this end—the maintenance of the alliance with Russia and the Entente with Britain, the prevention of any understanding between those who are France's "friends" and those who are her "enemies", the corruption of the French Press with money supplied by the Tsar's Government. And now that the day has come and gone, M. Poincaré can say that *ex hypothesi* all the blame rests with the other fellow.

The more I read these apologias in which ex-Presidents, ex-Premiers, and ex-monarchs prove that somebody else caused the war, the more astonished I become at the contempt which they appear to have for us ordinary people. They must consider us to be either completely ignorant or completely idiotic. M. Poincaré's contempt for us is

[2] *The Memoirs of Raymond Poincaré*, translated and adapted by Sir George Arthur.

undisguised. His note is always one of defence. Not unnaturally, for there is a perfectly clear and definite charge against the policy which, pursued by the statesmen of the Central Powers and of the Entente, led to the war. It has been formulated again and again in Germany and Austria by persons who are called pro-English or pro-French, and in Britain and France by persons whom M. Poincaré calls defeatists and pro-Germans. In the works of the late Mr. Morel and of Mr. Lowes Dickinson, to take two English writers, the charge is not merely stated in general terms, but chapter and verse are quoted in detail from diplomatic documents. The same is true of the French writer, M. Fabre-Luce. But over and over again, M. Poincaré, like all the other apologetic statesmen, writes as if none of these books had ever been written, or at any rate as if none of us had ever read them. It is true that he does often mention M. Fabre-Luce, who seems to have annoyed him considerably, and he professes to answer his charges. The answers are either sneers or quibbles over unimportant details. No one who had not read M. Fabre-Luce's able work could possibly gather what he really says from M. Poincaré's " defence", for, like a clever advocate addressing a particularly stupid jury, he ignores the main charges.

There is one particularly striking example of this. The first part of M. Poincaré's first volume is concerned with the end of the Agadir business. The charges against the Franco-British Moroccan policy have been stated again and again by people

who in no way absolve Germany for her share in causing the war. They start from the secret clauses of the Treaty of 1904 between France and Britain, and the subsequent attempt to alter the *status quo* in Morocco over the head of Germany, who had just as much (and as little) right to a hand in the deal as we had. The secret clauses in the Treaty of 1904, in the Moroccan crises which twice at least brought Europe to the verge of war, and in the policy which consolidated two hostile groups in Europe, and eventually, in 1914, carried us over the verge of war, were of supreme importance. Lord Grey's aside about them, to which I have referred above, was an admirable example of the apologetic statesman treating us as if we were almost completely ignorant of everything which had been written in criticism of the Anglo-French policy. But M. Poincaré in this book goes one better. Though his first chapters are all concerned with the Moroccan question, he never mentions the secret clauses at all, and he completely ignores the charges against French policy. He puts up a few dummies, knocks them down with considerable skill, and then says: "Please, sir, you see it was the other fellow".

You may trust a German Hohenzollern to let the greatest number of cats out of the greatest number of bags, and the ex-Crown Prince Wilhelm of Germany[3] goes one better even than M. Poincaré.

[3] English translation, *I Seek the Truth, a Book on Responsibility for the War.*

M. Poincaré's apology makes a very unpleasant book—in fact, all these apologies are unpleasant. I do not like to see a fly struggling to extricate itself from a spider's web, even when it is the fly's fault that it is there, and even when the fly is an unpleasant fly. But the ex-Crown Prince of Germany seems to me a peculiarly unpleasant fly, and his efforts to extricate himself are positively disgusting. This is partly because he, or the person who helped him to write the defence, is much more stupid than a man like M. Poincaré—the stupidity of the book is really incredible if one has not read it—and partly because the Hohenzollern mind is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the minds of all the statesmen who are so busy now disclaiming responsibility for the war.

The question of responsibility for the war is from one point of view absolutely unimportant, from another of supreme importance. Whether the Kaiser or King Edward, Isvolsky, Poincaré, Berchtold, or Pashitch were most to blame is a negligible question which can only affect the memory of those who are dead and the consciences and future careers of those who are living. Besides, in my opinion, so far as history and truth are concerned, the question has been settled, and the verdict given. All the statesmen who write apologies, from Lord Grey to the ridiculous Kaiser, from this ridiculous Crown Prince to the frigid Poincaré, were responsible for the war. Of course, none of them " wanted " war; Emperors and Foreign Secretaries are no more sadistic

monsters and homicidal maniacs than are journalists. But they were all responsible for the war, because their minds and their policies were cast in a mould which made war inevitable. They were responsible in the same sense as the King and aristocrats of the eighteenth century were responsible for the French Revolution, when a small class caused a catastrophe because it could not bring itself to get its thoughts and actions out of the rut drawn by the vested interests of despotism. The rulers and statesmen of the twentieth century were responsible for the other catastrophe, because they obstinately pursued the vested interests of war, Empire, hegemony, Weltpolitik, and because, whenever anyone suggested that that was a certain road to war and that the nations of Europe might more profitably organize for peace, they did their best to brand him a traitor or a fool. Not that I think that either Lord Grey or M. Poincaré or the Kaiser are deserving of our moral indignation for this. One cannot be morally indignant with an engine-driver who drives his train to destruction because he is too blind to see the signals—though personally I should refuse to allow him to drive engines. I should, however, feel some moral indignation or discomfort if he spent the rest of his life writing books to prove that he had had nothing to do with the catastrophe.

The analogy of the engine-driver shows where the question of war responsibility is of importance. To hang the Kaiser, punish innocent Germans, or read moral lectures to M. Poincaré or the author of

such a silly book as *I Seek the Truth*, would be acts of a savage or an idiot. The important thing is not to punish the engine-driver, but to take steps so that no one suffering from his unfortunate infirmities will ever again be in charge of a train. The infirmities of the rulers and statesmen who took us all with such precision over the precipice are therefore of considerable interest. And here the Crown Prince's defence is of real importance. For, as I said, the Hohenzollern mind is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the statesmanship which, in all the Great Powers of the Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, was directly responsible for the war, and nowhere can you see more nakedly than in the Crown Prince's book that cast of mind and outlook which must be eradicated from our rulers if we are to escape a further catastrophe.

The Crown Prince's thesis is that the Kaiser always desired and worked for peace, and that a love of peace pervaded the whole of Germany's policy. There is a sense in which this is almost true. I doubt whether the Kaiser or the German Government ever seriously " wanted " war. But both the Hohenzollerns and the German Government were more responsible for the war than most of the statesmen and Governments of other countries, because they more persistently and crudely thought of peace in terms of war. From 1900 to 1914 the policy of all European statesmen may be summed up, not in the phrase, " Give us peace in our time, O Lord ", but " Give us peace on our terms, O Lord ". And it is the big battalions and

the threat of war which give us—or, in the hallucinations of this type of statesmanship, are always about to give us—peace on our terms. It is this mental attitude which leads in action to the system of hostile alliances, whether they be called Triple Alliances, Triple Ententes, Associated Powers, Little Ententes, or by any other name; it leads to the balance of power, spheres of influence, military and naval " conversations ", Army Laws, One-Power and Two-Power Standards, competition in armaments, crises, scares, panics, and finally war. And it is always the other fellow on the other side of the frontier who is the cause of all this, the villain who is increasing the size of his army or building a new cruiser with hostile intent. Whenever "we" add a battalion to our army or a battleship to our fleet, it is for defence, but whenever "he" does so, it is for attack. The whole of the Crown Prince's apology can be summed up in that sentence; it is the crudest possible inversion of M. Poincaré's position. Its only value is as an object lesson in political stupidity and blindness, and it is to be hoped that the ordinary man will take to heart and mind this lesson which all these apologies of statesmen who made the Great War are reading him. If a single one of these statesmen ever said about any part of their policy or about any of their actions: " I see now, we were wrong in this ", then it would be possible to hope that they had learned something from the years 1900 to 1918, and that the mind which made the war is giving way to the mind that may establish peace. But you may look

in vain for any such word, whether from the ex-rulers and statesmen of Germany and Austria or from those of Britain, France, and Russia. They all say precisely the same thing: "We were entirely right; the other fellow was entirely wrong". The inevitable conclusion is that they were all of them wrong and all responsible for the war, and that if they or people like them are allowed to control policy again, the same thing will happen again.

POLITICS IN SPAIN

UGYAR, *April* 1923.

THERE are no politics in Spain, in the real Spain. The real Spain consists of all the land between the Pyrenees and Portugal, except Madrid, Barcelona, and perhaps one or two other towns. It is a land of vast plains ending upon the horizon in great mountains, and of mountains dying down again far away into another vast plain. It is a land of the donkey and mule, of corn and vines and olives. The inhabitants are peasants who cultivate with immense assiduousness the great levels, and who terrace high up into the mountains in order to grow more corn and olives and oranges and almonds. The Spaniard cultivates his garden, an occupation of respectable antiquity which is productive of more good and less evil than many more modern occupations. If he has money, it goes into land rather than into the hands of bankers, brokers, and jobbers, and so, although to the traveller from the railway-carriage window Spain appears to be a gigantic country very sparsely populated, the price of land is everywhere very high, amounting in some places to as much as £500 an acre.

The life of these peasants and cultivators is bound to the land. Its " tempo " is that of the

pace of the mules and donkeys, which, wherever you may be, are to be seen, with their great packs, moving slowly across the plains, or up and down the mountain tracks. In Spain, as everywhere else, it is the method of transport which determines how men shall live; in London we are made in the image of the Tube and Underground, but here on the Sierra Nevada it is the mule which makes man in his image. Anyone who has sat for many hours on a mule's back, picking his meditative way along a rocky mountain track, will know that to say this is no slur upon the Spaniard.

The superficial vivacity and excitability of the Southerner conceals the fact that the Spaniard lives slowly and meditatively. In a Spanish posada you sit after dinner round a wood fire with the innkeeper and his family, the " boots " and the carrier, and the conversation is only an interval between long silences in which everyone meditatively stares into the glowing ashes. The Spaniard, in fact, belongs to a Europe which had not invented the steam engine, or rather, perhaps, he belongs, not to Europe at all, but to the East, where men talk quickly but live slowly, cultivating their gardens and moving at the same pace as their camels or their bullock carts.

There are no politics in Spain. What does a man want with politics so long as there is land to plough and crops to carry? In the East there are only three subjects of conversation among decent people, the land, rice, and women, and it is the same in all countries which have not received the

blight or blessing of Western civilization. And so there are no politics here on the Sierra Nevada, or in La Mancha or the villages of Catalonia. Seeing this, and noticing, too, the great skill and energy with which the Spaniard cultivates his land, one might reasonably think that Spain would be a very peaceful and prosperous country, untroubled by politics and politicians, by foreign entanglements, military glory, or the phantasmagoria of imperialism.

But upon this immense land of plains and mountains, of mules, asses, and cultivators, of another age or another continent, modern industrial civilization has laid a finger at two or three isolated spots. Even the tip of the finger of the nineteenth century is very powerful. These spots, Madrid and Barcelona, are small, alien excrescences upon the body of the real Spain, yet they control its destinies and dispose of the lives of its peasants and its muleteers. There are politics in Madrid, and politicians, and all the apparatus and organization of Western civilization, from a Ritz Hotel to a howitzer. It is interesting to catch a glimpse of what they can do with a fertile and prosperous country like Spain.

I was in Madrid on Good Friday, and the whole population of the town was in the streets watching the processions. It was impossible not to be struck by the large number of soldiers. There were soldiers everywhere, not only on duty, guarding the route of the processions, but also in hundreds among the spectators. Spain, in fact,

maintains a large army by the aid of conscription. Here in the mountain villages of Andalusia you will hear that the real Spain hates the army and hates conscription. No one wants to be a soldier, to be sent away from the mountains to a barrack in Seville, and the only person who has a good word for conscription is the " alcalde ", who can use his power to call up and banish from the village for a year or two any young man whose conduct is unsatisfactory, or whose wife is desirable.

It is Madrid, and the politics and politicians of Madrid, who impose upon the villages of Andalusia and of the real Spain conscription and a large army. At first sight the existence of this large army " is strange because, you know ", there is no one apparently for it to fight. Of all countries in Europe, Spain is the least open to attack by its neighbours, and has the smallest motives for attacking its neighbours. France has found for a century, and probably will find for one or two more, sufficient occupation for her troops on her eastern frontier, and not even a Spanish General can believe that Spain is in danger of invasion by Portugal. Spaniards sometimes talk bravely of invading Portugal, but the army is certainly not maintained for that purpose. So far as Europe is concerned, Spain could safely demobilize the whole of her army, abolish conscription, and entrust the maintenance of internal law and order to her excellent and decorative police force, the *Guardia Civil*.

The Spanish army is not simply decorative; it

is intended for use, and is used for a very definite purpose. Madrid, and the politicians and military men, have decided that Spain must be an imperialist Power in the modern sense. Across the Mediterranean, on the northern coast of Africa, lies the territory of the Sultan of Morocco. Most of the Sultan's territory is " protected " by France, and in the language of modern Imperialism " protection " is, of course, a euphemism for conquest. But there is a corner of Morocco which has escaped French protection, and here Spain has carved out her empire. It consists of the town of Melilla and a mountainous hinterland inhabited by turbulent and unsubdued tribesmen. Again, round the corner of Africa, on its western coast, is a piece of territory ironically called the Rio de Oro. It consists of barren deserts and a few meagre oases inhabited by hostile nomad Arabs and Berbers. Here, too, Spain is fulfilling her imperial destiny.

The only use of the Spanish army is to fight an unending war in Morocco, and to garrison the deserts of the Rio de Oro. Such are the purposes for which Madrid and modern civilization tax the peasant and conscript him. Two men from this Andalusian village have just returned, having completed their term of service. They spent it in a small fort in the Rio de Oro, a fort which was surrounded by desert and which they were never allowed to leave because the inhabitants would have attacked them. They were lucky, for they might have been sent to Morocco and have found

their graves there with the thousands of other peasants who perished in the recent disaster. The whole of Spain, except a few politicians, the military Juntas, who are still the real rulers of Spain, and apparently the King, is opposed to the war in Morocco. There is nothing of any possible value for Spain to be got out of Morocco or the Rio de Oro, but the peasant is still taken for months or years from his fields to be slaughtered in the one or to be interned in a fort in the other. And the reason is simply this, that, although there are no politics in Spain, there are politics in Madrid.

JOHN BRIGHT AND LIBERALISM

The Life of John Bright is, I think, one of the best of Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's books. It has the merit of being a readable biography and at the same time of giving one all the material necessary for understanding the character, ideas, and achievements of the man who never was, or pretended to be, a statesman. Perhaps to-day there are a good many people who will think Mr. Trevelyan's biographical method old-fashioned, for he allows the facts to give a shape to his book rather than his book to give a shape to his facts. The modern biographer leaves nothing to the reader's invention, for his own is too active, and nothing to his imagination, for his own is too inventive. It is, I find, almost a relief, for once in a way, to be left alone with a dead man's speeches, letters, and actions, to be invited to reconstruct one's own picture and to invent one's own theory.

Bright was so simple a character and the lines of his political life were drawn so cleanly and firmly that it may seem unnecessary to talk of pictures or theories. Yet from the point of view of political psychology, and of the philosophical history of politics, there are some interesting and curious, if

not puzzling, things in his career. Looking back over the nineteenth century in England, one thinks of Bright and Cobden as the founders and leaders of early Radicalism, the fathers of later Liberalism. The labels of political parties, when they attain the dignity of ending in an " ism ", imply that there are some general ideas—" fundamental principles and ideals ", the politician would say—behind them. The relation of such political ideas to politics and the course of history is one which, I think, still needs a good deal of exploration—indeed, it would have results which would astonish many historians and most politicians. But both those who professed and those who opposed nineteenth century Radicalism and Liberalism would have agreed that, far more than most political creeds, they had their roots in general ideas, while their finest flowers and fruits embodied high ideals and great principles. Englishmen for the last 235 years have prided themselves on having no necessity for revolution as well as a congenital distaste for it except in other people's countries (where it may be a not unwelcome sign of racial inferiority or even, like despotism, the justification for an inevitable war), and their history, at any rate during the last century or so, has commonly been regarded by them as a successful attempt to obtain the results of revolution without a revolution. The Radicals and Liberals did not invent the phrase " Liberty, Equality, Fraternity ", and many of them regarded the inventors of it much as Mr. J. H. Thomas regards the Bolsheviks, but, certainly after 1867,

if not before that, most Liberal politicians would have admitted that the phrase described a material part of their political creed.

If this be correct, one fact which emerges from a study of Bright's career seems to me curious. No man did more than Bright to create and to mould British Liberalism of the later nineteenth century. And yet even in this country no politician has ever been less given to talking about general ideas or principles. Bright in his speeches hardly ever mentions an abstract idea or deals with the general aspect of a question, and it would be extremely difficult to show by quotation that he had anything which might be called a " political creed". Only in the Reform battle of 1866 do we find him forced, as it were, to formulate political principles, such as that "justice is impossible from a class; it is almost certain and easy from a nation ". But even then the principle seems to be enunciated reluctantly, and in a form as little as possible removed from a particular and concrete case. His argument is not so much that political equality is right, as that all monopoly ends in injustice. Look, he says, at the 1,200,000 paupers in this country; look at the fact that half the land in England is in the possession of fewer than 150 men ; that is the result of not giving the franchise to the working men.

From the " liberal " point of view, Bright all through his political life was always, except in one instance, on the right side. His political judgement was so good that it amounted almost to a special sense. It enabled him on the one hand to

foresee, much better than most men, both the ultimate effects of different policies and the ebbs and flows in the current of party politics, on the other to obtain a hearing in a hostile House of Commons for the most outspoken speeches that ever have been delivered against a popular war. Mr. Trevelyan more than once writes of the artistry of his speeches, and they certainly wear much better than most of the masterpieces of modern oratory. But apart from their style, what impresses one most is the amazing cleverness of the speaker in saying exactly the right thing in the right words for gaining and retaining the ear of his audience and for convincing any mind which still remained open to conviction. Take the famous passage about Colonel Boyle and Mr. Westerton's bookshop near Hyde Park Corner—it is to me almost inconceivable that a man should have been honest and simple enough to be able to find those words for the incident, and at the same time clever enough to realize that they were precisely the right words to use against the vulgar, Jingo Palmerston in the House of Commons.

Mr. Trevelyan quotes Bright's own account of how, after the famous "Angel of Death" speech,

> I went into Bellamy's to have a chop, and Dizzy came and sat down beside me, and he said, "Bright, I would give all that I ever had to have made that speech you made just now". And I just said to him, "Well, you might have made it if you had been honest".

Bright probably meant that any one might have made it if he had been honest; but he was mis-

taken. It was only because Bright was at once as honest as John Bright and as clever as Benjamin Disraeli that he was able to make that speech. His cleverness, of course, was instinctive rather than conscious. And it was by instinct rather than by, or through, the appeal of abstract ideas or principles that he found his way to his political beliefs. That is why in his speeches he always keeps so near to particular cases, and why the cases so often have a purely material appeal. His political ideal might not unfairly be stated in his own words as " a fair share of comfort, contentment, and happiness among the great body of people ". He fought for free trade and the extension of the franchise, and against war, because he felt that the first two made for his ideal and the last destroyed its possibility. And it is, I think, curious that out of so instinctive a political attitude there immediately emerged so conscious and intellectual a political creed as nineteenth-century Liberalism.

ET CETERA

THE ARISTOCRATIC MIND

For the ordinary person of plebeian origin, who spends his time in the society where he was born, it is difficult to get much insight into the lives and minds of those who are socially his superiors. Luckily royal persons and aristocrats suffer, like humbler persons, from that malignant disease, the *cacoethes scribendi*, and the multiplication of books and the increasing habit of indiscretion make it possible occasionally to catch a glimpse of what really goes on inside the heads of princes and aristocrats. Letters and autobiographies are the fascinating road by which alone it is possible to enter the aristocratic mind unless you happen to be born with one.

I believe that the aristocratic mind is the result of environment rather than of heredity, and that it remains pretty much the same in all ages. I happened to read two books lately, widely separated in time, which confirm my belief. One is the fat autobiography in which Walburga, Lady Paget, with some *hauteur*, takes the outside world into her confidence. The other consists of the recently published letters of Queen Victoria's

uncle, Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. Let me deal with the lady first.

Lady Paget's book is fascinating because in the extracts from her diary and in the letters to herself from her husband, sometime British Ambassador to His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty the Emperor of Austria, she reveals with astonishing clearness her own mind and character and the effects upon both of her birth, class, education, and the society in which she has spent her life.

Lady Paget is simply an aristocrat; the daughter of a Count de Hohenthal, she married into the English aristocracy, and has lived the whole of her life in aristocratic and Court circles. At birth she must have been endowed with considerable intelligence, for all through her book there are gleams of it in the little character sketches of her friends and other people, and particularly in the unpleasant things which she says about them. But the truth is that, as this book shows quite plainly, the society in which she lived—the society of the "upper classes" in England and on the Continent—is incompatible with intelligence. It is also incompatible with all sense of realities. It can shoot thousands of grouse, pheasants, and rabbits in a day; it can dine, lunch, dance, and bow and bob at Levées and Courts; it can effectually prevent every reform calculated to ensure some faint prospect of decent government and peace (whether in Ireland or Europe); it can manipulate the wires of international policies until a European

war is all but inevitable; it can go into ecstasies over pet dogs or *Lohengrin* or Miss Corelli's novels; it can live in great houses and Florentine towers and have its photograph taken in immaculate uniforms, beautiful dresses, and graceful poses; it can make carpets, artificial flowers, " shoes of every kind ", " embroidered and embossed metals and leather ", objects in glass, wood, terracotta, pictures, needlework—it can do all this, but it cannot for one moment, as the " common people " often do, exercise its intelligence in a world of realities.

I belong to " the common people ", or " lower orders ", as Lady Paget calls them, and, I suppose, share their prejudices. Their province, one gathers from this diary, is to work. That " many battalions of various regiments " should be abolished and the Navy reduced in order that their schoolchildren should be fed—not to speak of the unemployed, who are, of course, " too lazy to work "—shocks her profoundly. Meanwhile Sir Augustus works hard at shooting his pheasants and catching his salmon, at lunching and dining and visiting his great houses, and Lady Paget wears herself out with making artificial flowers and embroidered metals. And, as she rightly observes when Lord Lamington " weeded a great many baskets of groundsel, and varnished the new library, and was always carrying about heavy furniture ", " this shows how contented it makes one to work and feel that one is useful ".

At the age of fifty-four Lady Paget for the first

time in her life found herself for a few weeks without her own carriage. She tells us that it was very amusing thus to be "living like the people in books". To the common people and lower orders, of course, it is only "people in books" who find it an event to be separated once in a lifetime from their own carriages. The effect of the perpetual carriage upon the character and intelligence is curious. In Lady Paget's society, for instance, Mr. Forsboom is the prophet. Listen to Mr. Forsboom on June 30, 1894:

> Mr. Forsboom came to see me. He took away an influenza oppression from my chest by laying on his hands. He says that all signs point to an elementary catastrophe, probably a conflagration of the earth, before the end of the century. In Europe, Switzerland and Italy will be safest, and France, Spain, and Portugal will suffer most. Is this going to be the unexpected solution of our present social difficulties?

If one did not know that it was impossible for Lady Paget to be in any kind of connection with so vulgar a person as Thomas Love Peacock, one might suspect Mr. Forsboom of having escaped from the pages of one of Peacock's novels. The idea that in an elementary catastrophe and a conflagration of the earth the aristocracy would find it safer to go to Switzerland than to France is a stroke of genius worthy of the creator of Mr. Firedamp. Walburga, Lady Paget, however, takes Mr. Forsboom and his conflagration of the earth quite seriously, and on September 21, 1894, solemnly records in her diary:

It is a curious thing, after what Mr. Forsboom predicted at Munich, that great earthquakes and forest fires have convulsed so many parts of the globe.

Lady Paget and Mr. Forsboom—indeed, the whole of this delightful book—confirm a psychological and historical theory which I have gradually been evolving. It is that in classes the mentality at the top—*i.e.* in Royalty and the uppermost aristocracy—is exactly what it is at the bottom—*i.e.* in the basement. Here Mr. Forsboom is for Lady Paget and her circle precisely what Old Moore is to the kitchen-maid. When Old Moore prophesies a "terrible catastrophe" in April, his clients are quite satisfied if a 'bus overturns in June, and Mr. Forsboom's prediction of "a conflagration of the earth before the end of the century" comes true for Lady Paget if there are some forest fires in September. My theory is that the minds of a Duke and a butler, of a Countess and a kitchen-maid, have a natural affinity, and at certain periods of the world's history become indistinguishable. Whether the Duke becomes more like the butler, or the butler more like the Duke, is a nice question; probably the influence is reciprocal. But whenever in history the moment comes at which the mentality of the Duke and Countess is absolutely indistinguishable from that of the butler and kitchen-maid, there is an elementary catastrophe—not indeed a conflagration of the earth, but a revolution. This is the real explanation of what happened at the end of the eighteenth century and of the deplorable behaviour

of the " lower orders " in Russia and elsewhere during the latter part of Lady Paget's lifetime. She herself looks to Mussolini as a saviour; but I doubt he will prove a broken reed, for the truth is that there are limits to the enormous patience of the " common people ".

The condition of the aristocratic mind about a hundred years ago can be examined in *Letters of the King of Hanover to Viscount Strangford*, which have recently been published. The King was that Duke of Cumberland and uncle of Queen Victoria who had made himself " probably the most unpopular man in England". His letters give us an astonishing picture of his mind between the years 1839 and 1851. The King of Hanover, like his niece, has a very peculiar English style, of which the following sentence is not a bad example:

> As to Augusta d'Este, she is as much my Brother's Daughter as she is mine, but Lord Archibald Hamilton's, which my brother was fully convinced of by a Discovery of Letters found here in this Country, that were lost by Lady Augusta on her road from Berlin to England, which were delivered to the Duke of Cambridge residing here, and he forwarded them to the Duke of Sussex, and was the cause of his separating from her.

The Guelphic style does not make easy reading, but these letters amply repay one for the pain that will probably be caused to any ordinary person by the Duke's treatment of words and language.

The only consolation is that during his lifetime he appears to have treated persons in the same way. " By God!" said the Duke of Wellington, when

the House of Commons on one occasion showed its hatred of the Duke and his brothers, " there is a great deal to be said about that. They are the damnedest millstones about the necks of any Government that can be imagined. They have insulted—*personally* insulted—two-thirds of the gentlemen of England, and how can it be wondered at that they take their revenge upon them in the House of Commons? It is their opportunity, and I think by God! they are quite right to use it." And George IV. explained the peculiar unpopularity of the King of Hanover by the fact that " there never was a father well with his son, or husband with his wife, or lover with his mistress, that he did not try to make mischief ". These letters confirm the view of Wellington and George IV. There are only four people for whom he ever has a good word to say, Wellington, Lyndhurst, his correspondent, and himself. Even about the first three the good things are said sparingly, and only so long as his friends strictly conform to his own precepts of ferocious conservatism. His lack of appreciation of other people is made up for by his admiration of himself. He pursues those whom he dislikes—Radicals, Liberals, Victoria, Prince Albert, Jews, and Roman Catholics—with the most persistent and illiterate vindictiveness. Poor Albert can never do anything right, according to the Duke of Cumberland; he is never mentioned without its being pointed out that he had appeared either in the wrong uniform or in uniform when he ought to have been in black clothes, or " in a great frock coat and

round white hat, looking more like a tradesman or *garçon de boutique* than a prince ", when he ought to have been in uniform.

The mentality of the Duke of Cumberland is a beautiful example of what I referred to above, the fact that where you have the class system, with royalty and aristocracy at the top, the ways of thought and standards of taste at the top and the bottom tend to become indistinguishable. His mind is the mind of a super-butler. A devout and bigoted Protestant, he seriously maintains, in 1845, that the foundations of true religion and of the Church of England have been shaken and that this can be traced back to its primary cause, " the Bishops being permitted to lay aside their wigs, their purple coats, short cassocks and stockings, and cocked hats when appearing in public ". In 1844 he fills page after page of his letters with description and discussion of " a curious and most extraordinary circumstance (taking) place here in Germany ", " a most extraordinary and I may say untoward occurrence (which) has taken place within the last fortnight here on the Continent ". And what do you think it was? Only that the three Dukes of Saxe Altenburg, Coburg, and Meiningen had assumed the title of Royal Highness. Needless to say, that " poor creature and Fool Albert of Coburg " (" whom I never will allow the title of Consort, since Consort—as far as I have understood—was never used except for the female part of our Creation") was at the bottom of this outrage.

From the point of view of history and political

psychology, these letters are remarkably interesting. The Duke of Cumberland was a " violent reactionary in politics ", and he remained the same as King of Hanover. In his correspondence with the Tory Lord Strangford he is lavish with political advice, and never hides his real opinions. You can observe the conservative and aristocratic mind naked and unashamed moving on the troubled waters of the " modern world ". Ernest Augustus lived in a perpetual terror of any kind of change. Vested interest or privilege was sacred, and his duty consisted in preserving his own first, and after that those of other monarchs and aristocrats. But if you ever allow anything to change at all, you cannot tell where it will stop—and he is therefore always haunted by the fear of revolution. Very interesting are his remarks about the right methods of preventing change and revolution. Revolutionaries themselves have often accused rulers and Governments of deliberately making wars in order to rouse the patriotic passions of their subjects and so distract their attention from their grievances at home by death or glory abroad. The professional historian and politician always pretend that such charges are false. Queen Victoria's uncle, in his private correspondence, does not attempt to hide *his* view of the matter. The mere chance of a European war, or indeed of any war anywhere, makes him cheerful and rouses his hopes. And he explains why :

. . . though as a sovereign I must naturally be averse to wars, I sincerely believe that in the present instance it

might be the means of saving us from greater evil. There is no denying that there exists a state of irritation all over Europe, and a reckless thirst for changes, both political and religious. War would divert the minds of the people, and prevent, and perhaps break up, this spreading radicalism which, if it continued, must lead to the worst of events.

THE ANATOMY OF OLD AGE

Nearly two thousand years ago Cicero wrote a treatise on old age, the *De Senectute*, which schoolmasters, with malignant perversity, have used as a text-book for boys down to our own time. Four years or so ago Professor A. Lacassagne, a distinguished French physician, at the age of eighty, wrote a book which has been translated into English under the title *A Green Old Age*. Anyone who desires to meditate upon this painful subject will have at his disposal in these two books all that the wisdom and the learning of ancients and moderns have to say upon it. Professor Lacassagne's book recalls *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, and not only because the subject is "olde age, which being cold and dry, and of the same quality as melancholy is, must needes cause it". Burton is a writer who belongs to the same family as Montaigne and Sir Thomas Browne. They lived at a time when it was possible to sit in your study and write meditatively and discursively upon life and death and old age and the quincunx and the melancholy natural to witches. These men allowed their pens to follow the leisurely track of their thoughts as they surveyed the whole of human

knowledge, and, if they mention old age, they have the sense to tell you not only what they think about it, but also the opinion of Aristotle, Melanchthon, Rhasis the Arabian physician, the Psalmist, Tully, Wierus, Bodine, Erastus, Danaeus, Scribanius, Sebastian Michaelis, Campanella, Dandinus the Jesuite, and Cicogna.

We live in an era when such slow, wise old books are unfashionable, almost impossible. Alone the sum of knowledge and the number of authorities are too great to make the general method feasible. When Burton has to consider " those two maine plagues and common dotages of humane kind, Wine and women ", and their effect in driving men to melancholy, he has only to quote King Solomon, Jeremy, and Hieronymus Wolfius, and he has given us all that human wisdom had said upon the subject; to-day the number of authorities would run into tens of thousands. Nor is it only in quotations that our books differ from those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Science has regimented our minds and narrowed the field of their meditations; a writer to-day must choose his subject and feels bound to apologize for the smallest digression. It is, therefore, surprising and refreshing to find that Professor Lacassagne belongs to the same school as Burton and Montaigne. As befits a doctor, his book is really scientific; he tells you all that modern medicine has to say about the nature and cause of old age. But his book is full of digressions, full of quotations, and he does not hesitate to put the views of La

Bruyère, Diderot, and the artists, side by side with the theories of Mechnikov and of Dr. Freud.

"I write of melancholy", says Burton, "by being busy to avoid melancholy"; and so, too, might Professor Lacassagne say that he writes of old age by being busy to avoid old age. In art and literature there are two opposite views of senility. The first may be called the academic. In painting, the academic old man, the *belle tête de vieillard*, seems to have been invented by the immediate followers of Raphael, and he can, of course, be found annually hanging on the walls of Burlington House. His face is adorned with a long, white beard and an air of intolerable nobility. But Cicero invented him long ago in the *De Senectute*. This book is a masterpiece of smug unreality and rhetorical cant, and the Cato Major of the dialogue, noble and wise and purged of passion, shows that the academic old man is even more unbearable in a book than he is in a picture. We may thank Heaven that in life he does not and cannot exist. The other view of old age is exactly the opposite. In painting it is represented with terrible intensity in the portrait of himself by Leonardo da Vinci—a portrait of power, bitterness, contempt, hostility, complete disillusionment, and profound misery. In literature, in spite of man's inveterate tendency to deceive himself, the old are usually nearer Leonardo than Cato. Old age, says Montaigne, "marks more wrinkles on the mind than on our faces", and "nature should have been content to make it miserable without also

making it ridiculous ". It is cold and dry and of the same quality as melancholy is, says Burton. And M. Faguet adds: " Every old person is ridiculous and feels himself to be ridiculous, unless he be completely imbecile—which, it should be added, is more often than not the case ".

Professor Lacassagne will give you a far longer list of what the wise men of the world have said about old age. Undoubtedly human beings have dreaded—and do dread—old age as the time of failing desire, failing pleasure, and failing powers, and the only thing that is feared more is death. And so most people will turn with eagerness, as I did, to those parts of Professor Lacassagne's book which deal medically and scientifically with the nature of old age and the possibilities of avoiding it. The result is interesting, but not very encouraging. It is indeed encouraging, I think, to learn that old age does not begin until we are sixty; that from sixty to seventy we are in the infancy of old age, from seventy to seventy-five in its vigour; that real old age lasts from seventy-five to eighty, supreme old age from eighty to ninety, and it is only after ninety that we begin to decay. Apparently if you want to have the best prospect of a long life, you should become a soldier, while it is well to remember that novelists, dramatists, and poets have the poorest record for longevity. All this does not carry one very far. And one does not get very much further by turning from facts and statistics to the theories of great scientists. According to Mechnikov old age is a disease due

to the phagocytes eating up what are pleasantly called the " noble " cells of the human body. According to another theory man is, in the main, nothing more than a " colloidal emulsion ", and old age is simply a colloidal affection. And its cure? The doctors can at present provide no antidote to senility. " The great evil which shortens life ", Professor Lacassagne tells us, " is too much food." Others say that the rat, the monkey, and the man can be rejuvenated by an operation or life prolonged by injections, while the experiments of Bakhmetiev and Dubois give us a hope that we might live very much longer if, by means of freezing or inhaling carbonic acid, we could induce in ourselves a state of permanent lethargy—a feat which does not seem to be beyond the powers of modern medicine and science. Whether such a state of perpetual hibernation would be preferable to old age and death as we now know them will remain, I imagine, a matter of personal taste.

"LOOK UP THERE, WITH ME!"

I HAVE had a curious experience. People tell me that Mr. J. Middleton Murry has a message, and that it is contained in his book, *To the Unknown God*. So I read the book. As far as the message goes, I was completely disappointed, for it is a message which is only understandable by those who understand it. I am one of those old-fashioned people who want messages to be expressed in words and sentences which have a precise meaning; Mr. Murry is not. He objects to definitions; he uses words like "knowledge", "faith", "religion", "God", to mean what they do not ordinarily mean, but he does not explain what *he* wants them to mean. Consequently his message degenerates into either platitudes like "the good things are the things which make for life, and the bad things are the things which make for decay", or vague injunctions about loyalty, passionate desires for truth, isolation, and "holding the fort" of your editorial chair.

But I am not going to write about Mr. Murry's message. What interests me is his literary style, and it is with regard to that that the curious experience occurred. Whether it was chance or

whether it was a case of cause and effect, I do not know; but after reading Mr. Murry I felt an irresistible impulse to open a work of an author for whom Mr. Murry himself expresses the most unbounded admiration. The work was *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and, as I dipped about in its astonishing pages, I was suddenly struck with amazement. For I found that Mr. Murry's literary style was indistinguishable from that of one of the most famous characters in that famous novel. The resemblance is so remarkable that it cannot be mere coincidence. Of course I do not accuse Mr. Murry of plagiarism; it is one of those not uncommon cases in which one great writer or teacher has become so much a part of another that the second has been unconsciously, but deeply, impregnated with the thought and style of the first.

In order to test my discovery I read out to someone else passages from Mr. Murry and from Dickens intermixed, and asked my listener to tell me where Mr. Murry ended and Dickens began, and *vice versa*. My listener, though a literary expert, was quite unable to do so. In order to show this remarkable parallelism of style and thought, I propose to give here some of these composite quotations. They may, at any rate, afford an opportunity to some of my readers of exercising their literary acumen in " spotting " which sentences come from which author.

I use the word God and tremble. I cannot be for ever defining what I mean. Oh! let us not be for ever calculating, devising, and plotting for the future; I am weary of

such arts. If our inclinations are but good and open-hearted, let us gratify them boldly, though they bring upon us Loss instead of Profit. I am not a Christian, I am not anything, but I have been forced to the conclusion that I am religious. I would gladly leave it at that. But (let us assume that it is simply because I am religious) I am frightened of being misunderstood. I don't mind in the least when clever people say I have been converted, or as one did the other day, that I was running a Salvation Army and that he knew all about it; he had seen that kind of thing happen before. What of that! There is disinterestedness in the world, I hope? We are not all arrayed in two opposite ranks: the *of*fensive and the *de*fensive. Some few there are who walk between; who help the needy as they go; and take no part with either side. If he did really know all about it, I think he would write rather differently, for he is a writer. . . . It does not matter in the least that he should be content to dismiss me as the founder of a new Salvation Army—it does not matter, that is, so far as I am concerned. I am not angry. I am hurt, wounded in my feelings: but I am not angry. But I think it matters a good deal to him; for it is a minor test of his own discrimination.

. . . . . .

I went to bed alone in my little house, for which I have no particular affection, but where I am at least undisturbed by alien personalities, where I read when the family suppose that I have retired to rest (sometimes I injure my health more than I can quite justify to myself by doing so: but art is long and time is short), where I feel that, if anything goes wrong with me, I have only myself to blame, where I cannot have excitement even though I crave it. And now, having waked up, and spent a day utterly alone, having cooked myself many elaborate meals of mushrooms —I can get an enormous pound of them for sixpence—— with cream, sugar, tea, toast, ham,— "And eggs", sug-

gested Charity in a low voice. —and eggs, said Mr. Peck-sniff, even they have their moral. See how they come and go! Every pleasure is transitory. I can hardly remember how it was that I was so agitated twenty-four hours ago, when what I have now was remote, impossible, almost unimaginable to me. Every pleasure is transitory. We can't even eat long. If we indulge in harmless fluids, we get the dropsy; if in exciting liquids, we get drunk. I can just remember that there was something at once sinister and futile about the ticking of my clock; it seemed to have become almost the whole of me, which was sinister, and to be saying: "This way—that way—no way—this way —that way—no way", which was futile. I swayed with it in a kind of empty irritation. Years ago, that was. What a soothing reflection is that!

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But, whether or not I am guilty of vanity, it is a bold action in any man publicly to charge another with vanity; a bolder action still to declare, as Mr. Porter declares of me, that all I have written in these pages is rooted in vanity, and corrupted by it. Whether the charge is true or not I will not attempt to argue. I will not say how much it tries me; how it works upon my nature; how it grates upon my feelings. I do not care for that.

I can endure as well as another man. But what I have to hope, and what you have to hope, Mr. Porter (otherwise a great responsibility rests upon you), is, that this may not alter my ideas of humanity; that it may not impair my freshness, or contact, if I may use the expression, my Pinions. It may be a comfort to you, if not now, at some future time, to know that I shall endeavour not to think the worse of my fellow-creatures in general, for what has passed between us. That, I hasten to say, is no small consolation to me. It *is* a relief. But having discharged— I hope with tolerable firmness—the duty which I owed to society, I will now, my dear sir, if you will give me leave,

retire to shed a few tears in the back garden, as an humble individual.

. . . . . .

To have sat on a barren upland by the embers of a wood-fire with our foreheads touching the stars, musing on nothing to the cry of the sad and restless peewit and the droning of a ghostly snipe. . . . A beautiful starlight night! Behold the planets, how they shine! Behold the wonders of the firmament! How glorious is the scene! When I look up at those shining orbs, I think that each of them is winking to the other to take notice of the vanity of men's pursuits. My fellow-men! you are much mistaken; my wormy relatives, you are much deceived! The stars are perfectly contented (I suppose so) in their several spheres. Why are not you? Oh! do not strive and struggle to enrich yourselves, or to get the better of each other, my deluded friends, but look up there, with me! Look up there, with me! with me an humble individual who is also an Insect like yourselves. Can silver, gold, or precious stones sparkle like those constellations! I think not. Then do not thirst for silver, gold, or precious stones; but look up there, with me!

DISCARNATE SPIRITS

I DO not believe in ghosts, discarnate spirits, or spiritualism, but being always eager for conversion or conviction, I began with high hopes to read *The Facts of Psychic Science and Philosophy Collated and Discussed*, by A. Campbell Holms, which professes to set out the facts and philosophy in simple and matter-of-fact language. I got considerable amusement, a good deal of instruction, but no conversion from Mr. Holms. At one moment, indeed, I thought that the book was an elaborate piece of irony, like Butler's *The Fair Haven*. Mr. Holms tells us that he was originally a sceptic but that he has been induced by a study of the facts to believe in spiritualism or " psychic science ". That a rational man, writing a serious book (costing 25s.), could believe what Mr. Holms appears to believe seemed to me so impossible that, as I say, I almost came to the conclusion that Mr. Holms was elaborately " pulling my leg ". He may be doing so, but in the end I swung back to the opinion that he intends his book to be serious.

According to Mr. Holms, there is a vast mass of evidence to prove that after death we become

discarnate spirits capable of communicating, through mediums and in other ways, with the living. In a question like this everything depends upon what you mean by evidence and what you mean by proof. Mr. Holms skilfully, from the start, cuts the ground from beneath the feet of anyone who objects that the evidence is not good. He admits, in his preface, that " comparatively few records (of spiritualistic phenomena) are entirely satisfactory; usually there is some ambiguity or incompleteness which—though unnoticed or deemed unimportant by the recorders, to whom the incidents were vivid and impressive experiences—detracts more or less from their evidential value ". But, he continues, " we must be content with the accounts as they are written, and, as an offset against individual imperfections, embrace in our field of study an ample number from different sources, in which those of analogous type support each other and supply, as a whole, all the desired evidential details ". In other words, the more bad evidence you get for a statement, the more reason for believing it to be true—a comforting doctrine which has the immense advantage of making it possible to prove anything and impossible to disprove anything.

But the discarnate spirits and Mr. Holms have second and third lines of defence. We learn from this book that people with a sceptical or scientific outlook are not the right people to investigate " psychic phenomena ". An atmosphere of suspicion is sufficient " to inhibit almost entirely

psychical effects of any kind". Naturally, if the universe is so constituted that discarnate spirits will not work for anyone who takes steps to guard himself against self-delusion, error, or fraud, the evidence for the existence of discarnate spirits must be of that peculiar kind upon which, in more ordinary life, we would not "hang a dog". Thus Mr. Holms is in the enviable position of always having it both ways. For instance, the famous Eusapia Paladino, at home on the Ile Raubaud in the Mediterranean, had a whole world of discarnate spirits at her command who made the furniture jump, hugged the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, pinched Professor Richet, and used Mr. Myers's finger to write in blue chalk on Professor Richet's underclothing. When, however, Eusapia was induced to come to the calmer and colder atmosphere of Cambridge, there to be investigated by the Society for Psychical Research in the presence of the sceptical Dr. Hodgson and Mr. Maskelyne, the conjurer, the spirits did not work, and Eusapia was found to be using her own hands to make the furniture move or pinch the professors. But to Mr. Holms Eusapia's failure and fraud are only additional evidence for the discarnate spirits. The mere presence of Dr. Hodgson and other sceptics "inhibited or weakened mediumistic phenomena". "Eusapia was a peculiarly sensitive medium. . . . Some (of the sitters) were there for the avowed purpose of finding her out, and were committed to the theory of fraud, and Eusapia, in her abnormal mental state,

was probably impressed telepathically, and accepted their ideas of fraud as a suggestion."

Naturally, with these views, Mr. Holms has not had to look far in order to discover evidence for the existence of discarnate spirits. His book contains a mass of " evidence ". Its origin is not a matter of importance to him. An anonymous statement in a provincial paper, the book of an American spiritualist, any story about a ghost, a spirit, poltergeist, or psychic force is equally " evidence ". Mr. Holms's capacity for belief rouses my unstinted admiration, and until I read his book I had no idea that the life of discarnate spirits which awaits us all after death is even more fantastically absurd than that which we are now living on earth. That bats are clairvoyant, and that an ordinary table " when a friend enters the séance room will show its delight by pulsing throbbings, and will press against a friend with little caressing touches, pathetic in their suggestion of love ", are among the minor mysteries. More remarkable to me is the fact that several high-minded spiritualists have opened missions and conduct " rescue work " among the discarnate spirits. It has come about in this way. Persons of a dull and brutish character, when they die, appear to have some difficulty in becoming discarnate and of getting away from the earth; indeed with many of them the trouble is that they do not know that they are dead. Mr. Tozer of Melbourne was one of the first to start rescue work among these unfortunates, his object being to con-

vince them that they were really dead. He worked through Mr. Love, a medium, who was controlled by the discarnate spirit of a Chinese called Quong. Good work on the same lines has been done by Mrs. Wickland of Los Angeles and by Mr. E. C. Randall of Buffalo, U.S.A. The method adopted by most of these " rescue circles " is first to convince the spirits that they are dead, and then to touch and incline them to better thoughts " by the kindness and solicitude of the sitters ".

I have given my readers only a glimpse of the world of discarnate spirits to which this book introduces us. Mr. Holms, in his preface, gives thirteen quotations from various writers, Tertullian, Solomon, Mr. Gladstone, and Professor Hyslop, among others, with regard to the " value of testimony and the unreasoning attitude of sceptics in rejecting it ". I will make him a present of a fourteenth which he might add in a new edition; it is from the famous scholar H. Relandus, who wrote: " Quotidie magis magisque experior mundum decipi velle "—" every day I become more and more convinced that the world wishes to be deceived ".

THE GENTLENESS OF NATURE

The other day there was a hard frost upon the Sussex downs; a bitter north-east wind raced across the bare, whitened hill-sides. Late in the evening I came upon a green plover sitting on the ground, ceaselessly turning its head from side to side. I picked it up, and found it to be unwounded, its wings unharmed, and not a speck or blemish upon its magnificent plumage. When set down upon the ground, it began again to turn its head from side to side, and so, I imagine, it would have gone on sitting there with closed eyes, dumbly and patiently turning its head from side to side, until, in the bitter cold of the night wind, it as dumbly and patiently died.

In England, even upon the bleakest downlands, it is a rare thing to find a wild animal dying of what the coroner calls "natural causes". That is because in this country we have succeeded so amazingly in taming Nature that she hides entirely from us her ruthless ferocity, her dark and gloomy ways. To the Englishman Nature is a thing of spring, of lambs gambolling in snakeless meadows, of wild flowers and the song of larks. In our towns we have covered her over completely

with paving-stones, and asphalt, and houses; in the fields we cover her up with corn and turnips and fat sheep and shiny domesticated cows; in the rich man's park we cover her up with ridiculous hand-fed pheasants.

But elsewhere, in the East for example, where Nature rules man and not man Nature, the depth of her melancholy and her iron ruthlessness become apparent. The curious forgotten fact is that even in England not so many generations back she was like that. To-day in our churches we still pray anachronistically to be delivered from the scourge of cattle murrain. Some years ago in Ceylon, I saw what it really was that our forefathers so fervently prayed God for protection against. It was Nature—pitiless, untamed, and all-powerful—appearing in the form not of violets and cowslips, but of pain and destruction and wholesale death. There is a district in the south of Ceylon consisting principally of jungle. The chief population consists of wild pig, deer, buffaloes, leopards, and elephants. But there is also a human population of about 100,000 living in scattered villages. Such wealth as these men have lies in their herds of cattle, in the bulls which draw their carts, and the domesticated buffaloes which, treading the round of the rice-fields in primeval fashion, take the place of ploughs, and treading the grain upon the threshing-floor serve the purpose of the flail and threshing-machine.

Upon this district there descended suddenly murrain or rinderpest. It was the season when

the crops were on the ground, and the cattle had therefore been driven out from the villages to graze in the jungles or the great open spaces of dry lagoons. The disease first appeared in a herd of 150 buffaloes grazing in such a lagoon. When I went to the place, the ground was covered with great beasts lying dead or dying, and the flies were swarming over the dead and dying alike. Out of the clouds of far-off Colombo, that mysterious entity, "the Government", sent down its orders that all cattle should be tethered or impounded, that all "suspected" beasts should be segregated and "infected" shot. But it was all useless. The disease had spread already into the jungle, to the wild buffaloes, and the jungle was soon full of death. The carcasses lay thick in the lagoons, and on the game tracks, and around the waterholes. The herds of wild pig came and fed upon the infected bodies, sickened, carried the disease back to the domestic cattle of the villages, and died everywhere in hundreds. In the thickest jungle you came upon even the great sambhur deer dying. And the villager, after the manner of the East, prepared to watch ruin descend upon him silently and patiently. He would do nothing. He had never tethered a buffalo or put his half-wild bulls within fences, and therefore to tether a buffalo now or to impound his cattle was not only useless but impossible. He had never killed his own animals, and therefore nothing on earth would induce him now to kill a plague-stricken beast, though it were a mere living mass of flies and

maggots. Even on the few main roads bulls dropped and died, and were left to rot where they had fallen. Herds of two hundred dwindled in a few months to two or three head of cattle, and many a village saw almost its entire wealth swept away in a week.

Around the village the grim cruelty of Nature had full sway. There was a village of some forty huts, a little Government school, a tank, and a stretch of rice-fields, set in the jungle. A villager told me that there was a plague-stricken buffalo near the tank. I went through a little patch of jungle and came out upon the bund of the tank. It was a pleasant sight after the dry, scrubby, barren jungle. Great kumbuk and tamarind trees grew upon the bund, the sheet of water was starred with lotus flowers, a great flight of teal flew whirring round and round high overhead. I sat down for a moment, and then far off across the tank in the water caught sight of a black patch, clearly a wallowing buffalo. And almost immediately it stirred, and, as I sat there, I saw that it was very slowly moving towards me. This in itself was strange, for a buffalo will always move away from you, and I had expected a long, hot chase. As it came nearer, even at 250 yards, you could see from its slow gait that it was plague-stricken, and as I sat there in the sun watching it drag itself towards me I felt as if it was deliberately coming to be killed, to be put out of some intolerable agony. At 100 yards I fired at it with a rifle and missed completely, but it paid no attention

and continued to plod straight towards me. I fired again and it fell dead. And when I went up to it I found that the whole of one side of its face, including the eye, had been eaten away by maggots.

But it was in the real, thick jungle that one got the full impression of the pitilessness and melancholy of Nature. That hot season, when the murrain was still in the land, I went one night to sit up and watch the animals at a waterhole. It was many miles from any village, and for miles it was the only hole which had not dried up, so that the wild beasts for a great distance round about had to come nightly to drink at it. When I reached it towards evening, the sight and smell of it were alike appalling. The jungle was dense, and suddenly you came out of it upon a great slope of bare rock raised above the trees. In the centre was an immense deep hole full of water. Upon the rock around the hole were twelve dead buffaloes, three dead sambhur deer, and half a dozen dead pigs. In the water floated three huge swollen carcasses. The jungle round was littered with bodies. The maddening thirst which comes with the disease had brought the wretched creatures to the waterhole, and there they had dropped and died. One carcass had been half-eaten by a leopard at some distance from the hole, so I determined to watch there while my men dragged the bodies from the waterhole, and made as clear a space as possible on the rocks. I made myself a little screen of branches a few yards from the body and sat

down to wait. In the jungle there is no kind of joyousness or movement of bird or animal life. Everything slinks by silently, fearfully, almost sadly. As I watched, a small grey mongoose slipped into view, slunk into the belly of the buffalo and began to feed on the flesh. Nothing else moved, no sound came, and then suddenly there stood a few yards in front of me the leopard, quite motionless except for the tip of his tail which moved slowly from side to side. He stood there listening and staring intently for a second or two, and then the mongoose scuttled out of the carcass, and the leopard melted away immediately from before my eyes, just as he had appeared, without any visible movements, like a picture thrown upon a screen by a magic-lantern and then instantly removed.

I went back to the waterhole. For hours there was no sign of life, except once for a few minutes down a track I saw a black object, probably a jackal, leaping about silently in the moonlight, wildly like some mad thing. Nothing came to the hole and no sound broke the stillness until about two in the morning, when a great crashing rose up from below in the jungle. Then an enormous head appeared in the bright moonlight from the deep shadows of the trees, and ponderously an elephant shouldered himself on to the rock. Another and another followed—eleven, one behind the other. Then very slowly and deliberately they lined up in a row at the waterhole, a gigantic bull at one end and two tiny beasts at the other end

of the line. They stood there slowly and sadly swaying their trunks and their great heads, and lifting first one foot and then another. The old bull at last put his trunk into the water, but it was too foul to drink. For a few minutes the whole line stood there in the bright light of the moon as if they were part of the rock, but with the same melancholy swaying of the trunks and heads. Then very slowly the old elephant turned away and one behind the other they filed into the jungle. There was no water for them, I knew, within twenty miles.

THE END